ASHFORD CHURCH.

CHARLES IGGLESDEN.

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E. M. Gummer.

with memories of

Spring 1927.

THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER.

Ashford Church

By CHARLES IGGLESDEN

Original Sketches by X. Willis.

1924.

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Preface to the Third Edition

In the description of Ashford Church as it appears to-day I have devoted considerable space to changes that have taken place inside and outside the structure during the past eighty years. This information I obtained some twenty years ago from several old inhabitants of the town, now dead, who raked their memory for my benefit. And I venture to think their revelations will be equally beneficial to the present generation and those who come after us, as otherwise there would exist no record of the many alterations made at various times. The information of a verbal character, was obtained from such reliable authorities as the late Dr. George Wilks, the late Mr. Robert Elliott and the venerable verger, Mr. John Elgar. In this, the third edition, I have added changes made during the past twenty years.

CHARLES IGGLESDEN.

ASHFORD,
March 1, 1924.

HISTORICAL OUTLINE.

HILE there is no richer part of England than Kent for beautiful churches no town in the south-eastern district of the county possesses a finer parish church of the Perpendicular style of architecture than Ashford. It stands in the midst of other grand structures—Lydd Church, described as the cathedral of Romney Marsh; Minster Church, the cathedral of the Isle of Thanet; and historic Tenterden Church, with its strange old legend connected with the Goodwin Sands, aptly called the cathedral of the Weald.

Yet St. Mary's is not so very old as churches go. When the Danes over-ran the tract of country stretching between Appledore and Great Chart they destroyed

the church of the latter place, demolished houses and slaughtered the inhabitants. Ashford was then unknown, but the survivors of the massacre at Great Chart migrated to the spot which became Eshetisford and subsequently Ashford, and there is every reason to think that a church was erected in the midst of the rustic dwellings of the immigrants. Still this is only an assumption. The earliest mention of the sacred building is to be found in Domesday Book.

From that time until the days of Sir John Fogge—who between 1460 and 1490 rebuilt the tower and renovated the rest of the edifice—no record of the church can be found, and the actual date of the building is a matter of conjecture and the theme of much argument among archæologists. It has been called Early English by many, and others contend that it is almost wholly Perpendicular. But now, through the mist of uncertainty, comes the clear opinion of Sir Reginald Blomfield, M.A., A.R.A., F.S.A., who has thoroughly examined the structure, noted every capital and base of

the columns of the arcades, which have by previous writers been described as Early English, and concludes that they are late Decorated. The opinion of such an eminent authority as Sir Reginald Blomfield cannot easily be upset, and, having implicit faith in the correctness of his views, I confidently describe St. Mary's generally as a church of late Decorated interior and Perpendicular exterior. The walls are undoubtedly of greater age, and, the remains of the old window in the south-west part of the south transept being Early Decorated, we can at once go back to the beginning of the 14th century.

The plainest solution of the problem appears to be this: — In the Early English days the walls of the present Church stood here; in the fifteenth century Sir John Fogge pulled down the old steeple and erected the present majestic tower, put in Perpendicular windows, and probably reroofed and renovated the whole place, to bring it all, or as much as possible, into the characteristic style of the period. Thus from the outside it looks essentially a Per-

pendicular church; inside are absolute proofs that the arcades are of earlier date. That the whole of it is late Perpendicular, of the time of Sir John Fogge—as positively, and it certainly seems hastily, stated by Sir Stephen Glynne—is disproved by the fact that Sir John Fogge is known to have *renovated* the Church, and obviously there must have been some structure to renovate. Had he re-built the Church the fact would have been chronicled. The arcades are of earlier date than Perpendicular, dating from the latter part of the 14th century. This makes the interior a century earlier than the time of Sir John Fogge.

Since the great alterations by Sir John Fogge slowly, but surely, the Church has been added to, repaired and renovated when necessary, embellished with richly tinted windows, improved by interior decorations—but in no cases have the original characteristics been effaced or traditions betrayed.

There is an old tradition handed down from generation to generation that Lydd,

Tenterden and Ashford Churches were built by three brothers and that "they threw their tools from one place to another." It is difficult to comprehend the meaning of the latter words, but some truth may underlie the statement that the three churches were renovated, at least, by the same builders and from the designs of the same architect.

The most important structural alterations of recent years were the widening of the aisles in 1827, the lengthening of the nave in 1861 and the building of the vestry on the left-hand side as you enter the north door in 1873. In each instance the greatest care was taken to keep the new part in harmony with the old, which is built of Kentish rag—the beautiful white rock that can be seen in most of the churches and public buildings of the county.

It is probable that in 1580 the Church suffered with the rest of the buildings in Ashford, for we are told in "Kilburn's History of Kent" (published in 1659), that on May 5th of that year, "in the night there happened a great earthquake which

much affrighted many of the inhabitants and caused them to arise out of their beds." The people fled to the nearest hill—probably what we call the Warren to-day—and throwing themselves on their knees prayed earnestly.

Standing upon an eminence, the Church is a conspicuous landmark for miles around but, owing to the building of houses and the closing up of streets during the past few years, the real beauty of the structure is hidden from the view of the town, the tall tower alone rising high above the house-tops. Yet not so very long ago it stood comparatively isolated, with but few of the cottages and unsightly passages that now enclose it, no pavement and no railings. The churchyard was open, with uneven gravel pathways winding in and out the gravestones, running from the entrance to the right and left till they lost themselves in the southern fields now covered by Church Road, Elwick Road and the railway, with South Ashford and New Town beyond. It was the introduction of the railway that brought about the

development of this district, to the benefit of the town, though to the disadvantage of the church from a picturesque point of view.

But we can go farther back and, giving imagination a free hand, picture to ourselves the rugged beauty of the surroundings, say two hundred years ago, when, raised high upon a mound, stood the fine old stone Church, with grassy slopes running down on either side, studded with slanting tombstones and browsed by wandering flocks and herds; when there were no buildings to impede the view to the south — the level country stretching away through Romney Marsh, the undulating wooded lands towards the Weald, and the Downs that are known as the Backbone of Kent—when no buildings stood at the east or west, save the old timbered College, or Vicarage, on one side and the ancient Grammar School on the other. It stood there, did this old Church, almost by itself and, like a sentinel, watched over the single, long, straggling street which Ashford then possessed—over the

market place and the group of old buildings which nestled under its snug shadow on the north side. Several of the latter still remain, fine specimens of Elizabethan architecture. It is sometimes asserted that in the old market place of the High Street two Protestant martyrs, Matthew Bradbridge and Nicholas Final, both of Tenterden, were burned to death on a cold January day in 1557, but the actual spot was in a field towards Willesborough where the water works stand.

The living is now in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of Rochester, the property having come into their inheritance through the generosity of Henry the Eighth. In the old days of Priories it belonged to that of Horton and then to that of Leeds, but the dissolution of these religious institutions by the English king brought much property within his royal grasp, and most of the churches and manors of the county were distributed among the Deans and Chapters of Canterbury and Rochester, founded by him. In 1649 the living was valued at only £50, and we are told that

the communicants numbered 650. At present the gross value is £600 and the net annual value £340.

EARLY DECORATED WINDOW.

THE EXTERIOR.

THE perfect proportions of this cruciform church are visible from all points of view, for whatever may be the date of its walls and interior it is, thanks to Sir John Fogge's renovations, distinctly Perpendicular to all outward appearances. Out of the roofs of the nave, chancel and transepts—all sloping down to embattled parapets—rises the famous tower, one hundred and twenty feet in height, its octagonal turrets relieved by a pinnacle at each corner, these in turn being surmounted by a gilded vane. More than a hundred years ago one of the vanes was struck by lightning. On the occasion of its destruction a terrible storm broke over Ashford and, the lightning striking the church

THE CHURCH IN 1813.

SHOWING THE OLD PORCH AND NARROW NAVE.

FROM AN OLD PRINT.

steeple while service was being held, a panic arose and many persons were injured. The two moulded courses around the tower should be preserved. The upper one has been repaired, but the lower one is crumbling through the ravages of age. According to an old print of the Church, dated 1813, and which is reproduced in this volume, the courses did not run round the pinnacles as at present. One of them —in the north-east—was repaired about fifty years ago, and it led to a tragic accident. The work had just been completed, and a bricklayer's labourer named Hills was removing the scaffolding, when he thoughtlessly untied the rope which held up the very pole upon which he was sitting. Precipitated below, the poor fellow was dashed on to the roof and killed. In the panels of the parapet are shields bearing the arms of the Fogge Family and those of Archbishop Sumner. The windows in the tower differ at each stage. In the lower storey they are plain but just above, in the belfry, tracery decorates them.

Just in the north-west corner is the stair

turret, leading to the belfry. It is in entire keeping with the main building, octagonal in shape and capped by a circular embattled parapet.

It will be noticed that the various roofs are surrounded by embattled parapets. Some of this decoration is of very recent date—1897 in fact. The roof of the old nave had parapets of similar shape, but when in 1827 the aisles were widened the new slanting roof was left quite plain at the edges. In 1861, however, when the nave was lengthened, the new work was surrounded by embattled parapets to match the roof of the chancel. But this left a large gap between the extension and the tower, and when the whole structure was thoroughly renovated in 1897 the parapet was continued and made to join the north transept. The result is that additional beauty has been given to the building as a whole, together with a look of completeness which it lacked before; and yet, so well has the modern work been carried out that the ordinary observer would scarcely notice the junction of the old and the new.

As a matter of fact, the last buttress marks the extent of the older part of the new nave; beyond that is the addition carried out in the year 1861.

Supporting the main portions of the building and giving it a symmetrical appearance are massive stone buttresses, capped with stone. Two at the east end and four at the west are set at outer angles with artistic effect. On the extremities of the nave to the west, the chancel to the east, and the transepts north and south are modern stone crosses of various designs.

Walking round the church in an easterly direction from the porch we at once find two objects worthy of notice. At the end of the chancel wall, below the window, is a niche containing the battered remains of a stone figure, supposed to represent the Virgin Mary, and damaged by the Roundhead iconoclasts. Let into the eastern wall of the north chapel is a large stone erected as a memorial of the Greenhills, an old Ashford family. Time is represented by a scythe and hour-glass, and a skull completes the allegorical suggestion.

Strolling in a southerly direction it is worth one's while to stand at the corner of the railings near the College steps and look at the Church, for it is from this position that the finest view can be obtained. The tall white tower with its castellated top; the red-brown tiled roofs, not jumbled together in hopeless confusion, but symmetrical; the clean-cut embattled parapets; the bright-looking walls of Kentish rock; the Perpendicular mullions of the windows, decked with tracery; the sombre background of the stained-glass; the massive buttresses—all these special characteristics of the structure bring themselves into view, while, rising from the ground, half hiding the lower walls yet giving them a genial warmth of tone, is the English ivy, always green, climbing by the side of its sister, the deciduous Virginia creeper.

Another excellent view, not frequently seen in illustrations owing to its inconvenient distance for photography, is to be obtained from the north-east corner of the churchyard. From here the foreground is dotted with tombstones, some battered and

ASHFORD CHURCH IN 1800

brown with age, and overshadowed by a couple of dark-hued firs and a bright laburnum, while the grandeur of the tower is set off by the solid and venerable ivy-clad walls and buttresses—old, yet well preserved. It is the lowest part of this eastern wall that may prove the truth of the tradition that part of the present building dates from the days of Henry the First—certainly a very ancient piece of stone work, but there is nothing to denote its actual age.

Coming to the south side we are reminded that years ago a sun-dial stood on the southern wall of the Strangford Chapel, but it was taken away during the restoration of the south transept, not very long since. Why are such lamentable things allowed to happen? In the old parochial accounts we read that in 1685 a new sun-dial was purchased for six shillings.

In the wall of the south chancel aisle is the priest's door—the clergyman's original entrance to the Church. How varied the dispositions, how diametrically opposed the opinions, how different the beliefs of those

who, during all these centuries, have walked through this old entrance to conduct service on their way from the College! Here came Robert de Derby in 1282, the first vicar of Ashford whose name is recorded in history. Here came Thomas Wilmote in the fifteenth century, the first master of the College. Also through the same doorway entered Hugh Pope, the Vicar of Ashford during the martyrdom of the Protestants, and he must have abetted, if not taken part in, the burning of the two Tenterden martyrs and the agony of John Brown, who, after having his feet charred to the bone, was placed in the stocks and then burned to death on Whitsun-Eve, 1517. Here walked Doctor Ponet, the scholar and mathematician, who made and presented an horologium to Henry the Eighth, which not only showed the hours and days of the month, but the tides of the sea; he afterwards became Bishop of both Rochester and Winchester, but died abroad, where he had gone owing to the persecution of Queen Mary. Along this pathway walked Joseph Minge, vicar of Ashford in

1581 and a Puritan, who refused to subscribe to the Whitgift Articles; and, later on, John Maccuby, who, being a Royalist, was ejected during the Commonwealth. But perhaps the most remarkable of all was Nicholas Prigg, the father of Nonconformity in Kent, who was ejected by the Act of Uniformity in 1662 and whose admirers, consisting chiefly of Scottish cavalrymen then quartered in the town, erected a dissenting chapel in St. John's Lane. This old building is still in existence, being used as a grocery store by Mr. S. J. Sankey. The Congregationalists of Ashford are descended from these Nonconformists and built themselves an elegant little church close to the parish church.

Truly may it be said that the spiritual affairs of no town have been watched over by men of more widely different trend of thought and doctrine than the Vicars of Ashford.

But to return to our ramble around the Church. In the western wall of the south transept can be seen the framework of an old window, blocked up when the nave was

widened and the galleries added early in the nineteenth century. There is a tradition that Roman tile work is encased within the walls of the south transept, but no architectural evidence exists to show that any of the present church is of so early a date as it must be if the Romans had any hand in its construction. Still, as old Roman tiles have actually been seen in these walls, there are two possible explanations—either a part of the wall has stood on this spot since the days of the Romans, or, when the wall was built at a later period some Roman tiles were found in the vicinity and used among the stone. Anyway, the remains of the window in the south transept are by far the oldest visible parts of the Church.

The stone work of this ancient window had long arrested the attention of those interested in the Church, and in 1901, thanks to the generosity of the late Mr. Robert Elliott, the Kentish rag with which it had been blocked up from time immemorial was taken out. Sanguine hopes were expressed that much of the original work would be

found; but this was not to be and, worse calamity of all, the stone was in such a decayed state that renovation, with fruitful result, was impossible. The only parts remaining were the cusping and some of the upper tracery. Still, the opening of the window was worth doing, as it proved to be Early Decorated, thus carrying us back to the earliest date of any visible part of the Church. The window remains open on the outside, repairs having been carried out upon the old stone.

There are three moulded doorways giving entrance to the church in the west, and all are surmounted by a label, or straight mouldings, and underneath is the same Tudor-like arch which is to be seen on most of the old doorways of the church. The centre one is conspicuous for the two coats of arms on shields in the spandrels, one belonging to Archbishop Sumner, whose arms are also to be seen at the top of the tower, and the other to the Fogge family. Archbishop Sumner was in office when the Church was lengthened in 1861. Somewhat similar in style are the two doorways

on either side, one leading to the north aisle and the other to the south. The spandrels of these two contain carved floral designs. The massive oak doors are embellished with carving. When the church was lengthened in a westerly direction these doorways were carefully taken out from the old and inserted in the new wall. But the old window was not preserved.

Forming a pavement outside the west door are a number of the oldest tombstones in the churchyard. The names are worn away, but their principal characteristics—skulls and cross-bones—are distinctly visible in many cases.

Following around the Church we find nothing of special interest till we reach the entrance, which consists of a porch within a doorway, the latter being of stone and its style in keeping with the west door. There is the label in this case with returned ends, and cylindrical mouldings relieve its appearance, but the spandrels are plain owing to the decay of the shields which once contained a coat-of-arms, probably of the Fogge family. The porch was added in

quite recent days. Originally a porch stood in the middle of the north aisle, but in 1827, when the nave was widened, this entrance was closed and a new doorway made in the north transept. The old porch will be noticed in the sketch of the church facing the next page.

Before the iron railing encircled the churchyard two clumsy, cumbersome wooden gates did duty in place of the modern iron ones.

It is believed that the precincts of the Church once included the spot now occupied by the cluster of buildings near the church gates, and on the site stood sheds to which criminals rushed for shelter and claimed sanctuary.

IN AND AROUND THE CHURCHYARD.

EFORE the churchyard was railed in, before even the paths encircled it, two old buildings stood within its precincts—the College and the Grammar School. The churchyard wore an unkempt appearance and children played among the tombstones. Several of these were removed when the Church House was built in 1897, they having been built into the wall upon the site where is stands. But the dead are not forgotten; their memory was perpetuated by the headstones being removed and the bones that were found beneath reverently buried in the old ground in Marsh Street (now Station

Road). The Church House is practically a social club, used more especially by the junior members of the congregation, the choir, and others who devote themselves to church work.

Within the College precincts and adjoining the Church House is the Parish Room, built in 1892. It was placed at right angles to the kitchen, so that the College and its buildings might retain the form of a quadrangle, the characteristic feature of the Vicarage of early days.

The residence of the Vicar is called the College from the fact that the original structure belonged to a College of Priests, founded by Sir John Fogge during the reign of Edward the Fourth, and the worthy knight bestowed upon it a library and furniture and endowed it with land through the liberality of the king. Not much of the timbered building is left, but the fine old chamber at present used as a kitchen remains and gives some idea of the beauty of the rest. This room was the hall. Most of the old house was demolished towards the close of the eighteenth century, but an

interesting manuscript written by the Reverend William Warren, curate of Ashford in 1712, and son of the Vicar of that name, gives a detailed description of it, and from this we gather that some beautiful ornamental glass used to adorn the windows, while a porter's lodge, now gone, must have been a quaint little building. In the centre of the three lights of the kitchen three most beautiful medallions can still be seen—the only remaining evidence of the richness for which the old College wood-work is also visible, notably some old panelling in the passage near the kitchen, a fine arch in the corner of the dining-room, and best of all, some folded-linen carving in the same room.

The old avenue of limes still stands in the College gardens. A ghost story attaches to this spot. A grey lady, it is said, walks along the avenue at certain times, and additional glamour is given to the weird tale by the supposed apparition of a Cromwellian soldier rushing after her. From this it may be gathered that the story emanates from the time of the Common-

wealth—a romance, maybe, or a tragedy —when desperate struggles occurred before the Royalists in Ashford were finally overpowered by the Roundheads.

It should be stated that much of the history of the Church and its adjuncts is preserved solely from the Warren manuscript. The writer in his preface modestly says, "If this Book shou'd happen to be preserv'd 'till we y^{t} are now alive shall be Dead and gone; perhaps these things wich may seem too minute, and not worth taking notice of now may not seem so then, especially to persons y^{t} shall then live in this Town and shall be in any measure curious and Inquisitive. Be that as it will, my Desire is, y^{t} this Book may always be preserv'd at Ashford, and y^{t} the Vicar for y^{t} time may always have it in his own Custody." It need scarcely be added that the writer's wish has been loyally complied with and the valuable manuscript is jealously guarded and rests safe in the keeping of the Vicar.

On the opposite side of the Churchyard stands the Old Grammar School, now pri-

vate property. It was founded and endowed by Sir Norton Knatchbull, of Mersham Hatch, near Ashford, in 1635, and, after passing through various vicissitudes, was finally closed in the year 1874. The endowment, however, continued, and in 1880 a new school was erected near Willesborough. The master's house and other buildings near the churchyard have disappeared, but the original schoolroom remains, the room where the Rev. R. H. Barham, the author of the famous "Ingoldsby Legends," was wont to spend much of his time spiritually labouring among the boys. He was curate of the parish church then. Upon the death of Dr. George Wilks, for many years precentor of the church, the old schoolroom was acquired by public subscription, and now goes by the name of the Dr. Wilks Memorial Hall.

Several relics of the past are to be found here. Outside, above the doorway, is the date 1635, the year in which the school was built. The entrance was peculiar in the old days; you went down three steps into a sort of well and then rose by one more step, and

this brought you on a level with the old oak floor, which still remains, although now covered with new wood. Inside the building are the two masters' seats to the south and west, while around the walls can be seen small pigeon-holes for books, the date of the carved work going as far back as the time of Charles the Second. The Latin inscription, "*Benefactorum Recordatio Jucundissima*," now placed over a cupboard which blocks the old master's doorway, used to be on the inside of an ancient porch within the outer door and steps. A picturesque turret rose out of the roof in the old days, but, becoming unsafe, it was of necessity pulled down twenty-five years ago, and the bell found a home at Aldington rectory. What looks like a tombstone on the right of the entrance is a blocked-up window.

Among the tombstones in the churchyard are many very old and weather-beaten, but you see none of the horrible oven graves for which many Kentish burial grounds, especially in the Weald, are noted. Many years since,

when the contracted space was filled, a new burial ground was laid out in Marsh Street (now Station Road), but this in time gave way to the Cemetery along Canterbury Road in 1859. One can find no remarkable inscriptions on the old tombstones, but names of Ashford families naturally recur time after time, although these latter are but sparsely, and in many cases not at all, represented in the town by the present generation. They are scattered all over the world. At least, Ashford knows them not. But their names remain, engraven on the tombs of their forefathers.

The Osbournes, or Osburns, whose names can still be seen in the churchyard, were the direct ancestors of the Duke of Leeds.

When the headstones stood in the wall that was pulled down to make room for the Church House there was one which always attracted attention. It read as follows:—

"Go home, dear husband, do not weep;
Dear child, don't shed a tear.
I am not gone, but just before,
To meet my Saviour dear."

Opposite the College stands a tombstone with the following epitaph:—

"The Remains of William Waters, commonly called Old William, And Mary, his Wife, are deposited at the foot of this stone. She died 22 of March, 1815, in the 77 year of her age. He died 17 of June, 1816, in the 90 year of his age. They lived together as domestic Servants In the same Family Forty Years Respected and Befriended by all classes of Inhabitants of this Town. They passed the remainder of their years Contented and Happy on the fruits of their Honest Industry. Reader! whether thy lot in this world be Poverty or Affluence learn from the example of these Good old faithful Servants that the sure way to Peace and Happiness is diligently to do your Duty in that situation of life in which you have been placed by your Almighty Father."

"Old William" was a butler at the College.

There once stood a stone bearing as an epitaph a remarkable rhyme, in which it was stated that a certain man of the name of Hammon was very proficient at the game of backgammon. But the stone has disappeared, and the memory of the champion gamester is lost to fame.

THE INTERIOR.

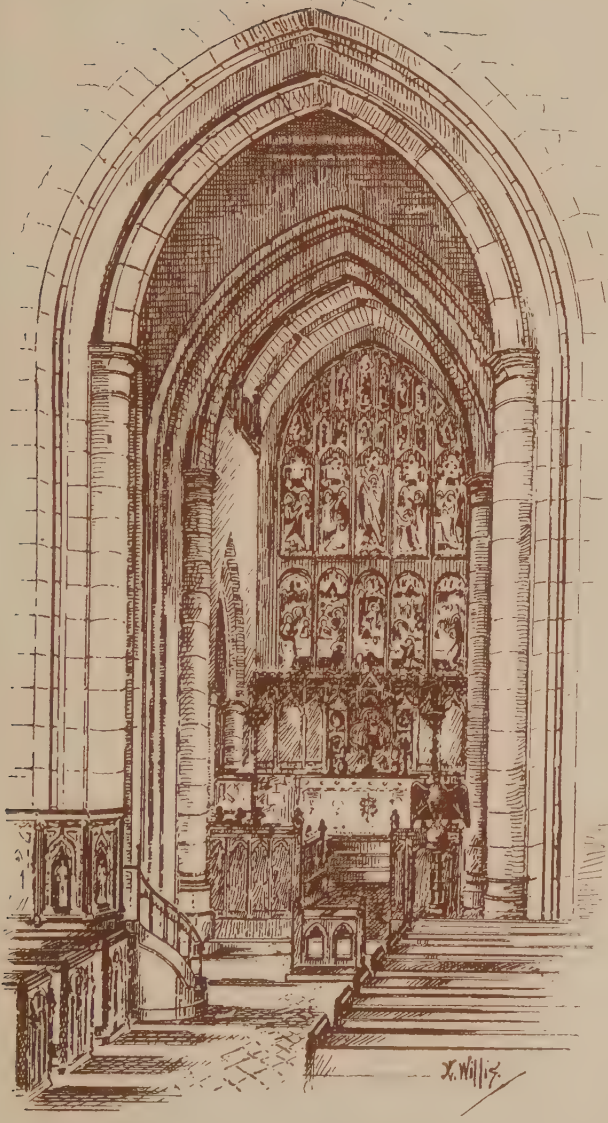
HE best idea of the cross-like shape of the building can be obtained by standing under the tower. At each of the four corners rises a majestic column supporting noble arches, and it is these, with their beautiful mouldings and hollowed chamfers, which give the Church its stately and cathedral-like appearance. All evidence goes to prove that a smaller tower originally rose from this spot and that when Sir John Fogge erected the present one the transept and chancel arches were cut, so as to make room for the increased size of the new structure. The original columns of the smaller tower are supposed to be enclosed within the present ones.

The first view of the interior impresses one with the idea that the Church is a mixture of Decorated and Perpendicular style. The tall arches of the tower and the windows on all sides are distinctly Perpendicular, but the shape of the other arches take us back to the Decorated period. Considerable variation is noticeable in the capitals and bases of the arches, and there seems but little doubt that during the 14th century the whole of the interior was re-built, the original shape of the arches being retained, while the old stone was utilised in the construction of the columns and even the arches.

To use Sir Reginald Blomfield's words, the following are the conclusions he arrives at:—" In regard to the date of the arcades in the south transept and chancel I have compared them with other examples and am pretty well satisfied that they belong to the Decorative period and late at that. The only doubt I have is whether they are not Transitional to Perpendicular, *i.e.*, dating from the latter part of the 14th century. The section of the capital to the column

on the south side of the chancel also occurs at Willingham, Cambridge. The bases also bear this out—they are all nearer Perpendicular than Decorative. The base of the second column on the north side of the Chancel is shown not to be Early English by its overhang." Sir Reginald Blomfield's opinion carries great weight, and those writers who have stated that it is an Early English church, and Sir Stephen Glynne, who goes to the other extreme and states that it is entirely Perpendicular, must have come to hasty conclusions without careful examination of the points at issue. The opinion of Mr. T. H. Oyler is similar. He writes to me: — "From a cursory glance one would be inclined to say the arcades in the chancel, south transept and part of the nave are Early English, but in the capitals and bases one fails to find the bold round and hollow mouldings of the Early English style, while the soffits of the arches in the chancel are hollow chamfered."

But let us now take a glance around. Down the body of the building we note the



LOOKING EAST.

slender pillars, the four bays on either side, which, being free from decoration, tend to make the interior look comparatively plain. The brightly tinted window above the western gallery, however, throws a glow of warmth into the space below, while the crimson edgings of the new windows that illumine the side aisles also help to subdue the cold white light of the plain glass.

The ugly wooden galleries unfortunately spoil the effect of the scene and it requires but a faint imagination to realise what a fine nave it would be without them. The want of seats is the excuse for their existence, and only 1,500 persons can find room in the church of a parish with a population of over 13,000. It is, therefore, a matter of necessity that they remain. When it was decided to lengthen the church in 1860 a proposition was made that the gallery at the west end should be dispensed with owing to its unsightliness, while, strangely enough, no similar suggestion was made in respect to the side galleries, which, it must be admitted, are far more unsightly than the other. The first two galleries were

erected in 1616 and 1637 respectively, the latter for the use of the Grammar School boys. In the north gallery there used to be the Knatchbull arms, but, like so many of the old gems of the church, they have disappeared.

Until 1827 the side galleries came forward, almost meeting in the centre, but when the new aisles of the nave were built these same galleries were carried back to their present position.

An old custom for the disposal of the pews used to exist. They were put up to public auction, and a legal agreement is now in existence, showing that on the 12th day of February, 1819, William Carrick, of Ashford, bricklayer, purchased for the sum of £20 5s., "the front seat or pew adjoining the north-east pillar of the steeple, measuring in length from north to south, 11ft. 9in., and now mark't or distinguished by the name 'William Carrick,' painted on the door thereof." The document concludes by stating that the said pew or seat shall be "at all times hereafter exclusively held, occupied and enjoyed by

him, the said William Carrick, his executors, administrators and assigns as his and their absolute property and estate. As witness our hands—J. Bond, vicar; J. C. Chittenden and Thos. Allen, Churchwardens."

Old-fashioned high pews were erected in 1745, but in 1879 the church was reseated at a cost of £1,200 and the present low pews were substituted.

The cove-shaped ceiling of the nave has worn many colours, and even lacked colouring at all, for until a few years ago it was merely white-washed. At last the panels were worked out in rich hues, while the bosses and ribs between stood out in bright relief. Then the ceiling assumed a sombre, brownish colour, in imitation of polished wood, but it bore a more striking resemblance to hardbake and kindred sweetmeats. Now the ground work is cream with the bosses plain gilt. And it never looked so well—delicate, chaste, bright and with a heightening effect.

Under the gallery stairs are two seats, which, although embellished with old carv-

ing, are of no great age themselves. They were built about seventy years ago when the late Canon Alcock improved the church in many ways. The gallery stairs then ran down into the nave aisles, but he turned them to the positions they now occupy. Over the entrance to the side aisles, entirely out of keeping with the Gothic style of the church, there were circular arches; they were abolished and fine half arches, dying into the pier of the tower, effectively substituted.

Looking towards the south from the centre of the church we get a glimpse of the Strangford chapel, the old rood doorways and the Alcock window. Here, just at the foot of the gallery stairs stood the vestry table around which parish meetings were held. Previously the vestry was curtained off in the space now occupied by St. Anne's Chapel.

Towards the north is the front entrance, with the sombre, yet richly tinted, Furley window, while by its side stands the organ, a magnificent instrument when it was purchased. Unfortunately full scope has never

been given to its power. Placed as it is in an enclosed corner instead of an open spot its swelling strains cannot resound throughout the building as they otherwise might do. The old organ used to stand in the centre of the west gallery.

Still pausing under the tower, and looking towards the east before the screen was erected, we had a view of the massive old choir stalls, the carved modern reredos and the large stained-glass window overhead, while between the pillars on either side we could catch a glimpse of Repton Chapel to the left, with old Sir John Fogge's square tomb below and his famous tilting helmet on the wall above, and to the right the chaste altar-piece and modern decorations of St. Anne's Chapel.

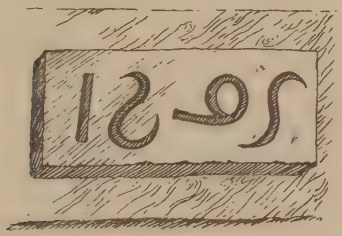
Before entering into a detailed description of the gems of the church it is necessary to look upwards and note the richly-painted square ceiling of the tower. Then again, on the north arch of the tower, facing you as you enter the building, are the Royal Arms in colours dated 1660, with the words "Fear God, Honour the King,"

and "*Dieu et mon Droit.*" Further reference to this old Royal Arms will be found in the chapter describing the belfry.

Over the tower arch facing the nave are some quaint, ill-proportioned letters, bearing the date 1638 and the initials of the churchwardens of that period. A few years ago they were obliterated, but it is satisfactory to find them once again before us to remind us of the customs of the past, when churchwardens were wont to carve their names or initials on many parts of the church fabric, from the leaden roof to the stone foundations. The letters and figures are gilded after the style of the bosses in the ceiling.

But, talking of old dates, we are reminded of a famous one still to be seen on a beam extending from the north-east corner of the tower towards the vestry door. During the daytime it is hidden in the dark recess, but at night, when the gas below is alight, it can be distinctly seen. The characters are remarkable and the actual date they represent was a debatable subject until Professor Wright appears to

have settled it. They are said to be of the same period as some to be found in the beam of the old Half Moon Inn at Cambridge, and this was at one time supposed to date from the twelfth century. Then came Hasted, and in his history of Kent he contended that the date was 1592, although he gave but little evidence to prove his contention. But about seventy years ago



THE OLD DATE.

Professor Thomas Wright entered heartily into the question of Arabic numerals, and in the course of an article published in the Journal of the Archæological Association he argues and proves that Hasted was right and that the date is 1592. In the first

place he goes on to show that until the fifteenth century the knowledge of these numerals was confined almost entirely to mathematicians or arithmeticians. So the date in Ashford cannot be of as early a period as the twelfth century. Those who argued in favour of the latter date believed that the two first figures were 1's. But Professor Wright not only disposes of this theory, but he shows that the second figure must be a 5. He says, "During the whole of the sixteenth century, in inscriptions the 5 took different forms, resembling more or less the same figure as commonly written in France at the present day." In some cases it more resembled a 1, in others a 2 or a 3. This fact may therefore account for the difference of opinion among those who have cursorily examined the date on the beam in Ashford Church; but Professor Wright is so clear in his conclusions that I must agree with him and put the date at 1592. But there is one remarkable point about this beam. The facsimile I give on a previous page shows that the 9 is turned so as to lie down between its neighbours;

yet Hasted in his history makes the figures stand up. Strange, but true. The carved wood cannot have altered and the only conclusion is that the Kent historian had great difficulty in obtaining a view of the beam and noted down the numerals, perhaps, from memory.

Cut out of the same beam and nearer the vestry door is another date—1794. Yet no mention of it has ever been made, and until I discovered it its existence was apparently unknown. It possibly signalises the renovation of some part of the church in 1794. Other very ancient beams were discovered in 1904, when the roofs of St. Anne's Chapel and the Smythe Chapel were deemed to be so unsafe that thorough restoration was found necessary. The timber was so much decayed that the beams consisted merely of an outside shell with powder within. Upon the removal of this ancient timber it became apparent that the large moulded beams were of the fifteenth century, and that the roof was restored in the eighteenth century, as indicated by the date on one of

the beams, 1772. In carrying out the restoration of the roof every possible portion of the old timber that could be used was spliced together.

A rood screen originally ran straight across the foot of the chancel, from the old staircase, which still remains in the Strangford chapel, to the north transept. In this it was somewhat extraordinary, although there are two instances in Kent—at Leeds and Eastchurch—where the rood screen extends over two aisles. This one at Ashford was of beautifully carved wood, but in 1697 was pulled down and transferred to the College; when that building was altered at the close of the eighteenth century, however, the screen disappeared. From an old record we read that William Whyte, of Ashford, by his will, dated November 6th, 1472, bequeathed 40s. "to the new work of the rood loft in the two aisles of the said Church; 20s. for each aisle." Not only does this entry prove that the rood screen or loft extended right across the Church, but it shows that one existed before that date, and the present stone steps in the

Strangford Chapel are probably the original ones.

As a war memorial to the 149 Ashford men who fell in the Great Conflict a new wooden screen was erected in 1921 in the same position occupied by the ancient one. It is an exquisite piece of work. The richly groined vault it surmounted on its west side by a carved cornice and cresting, into which "Laus Deo" is worked. On the east side are the shields of St. Mary (the dedicatory saint), the Diocese, the County, the Archbishop and the Vicar. At the back of the existing return stalls the war dates take their places. The detail of some of the ancient Kentish screens has a character of its own which it seems possible to trace back to the King's craftsmen employed in fitting up Henry V.'s chapel at Westminster. This fact has not been forgotten in the present instance. The oak tablet is designed in the same manner as the screen and is of considerable proportions—as required by the large number of names enrolled upon it in an admirably clear, and at the same time

decorative type. A carved gilded inscription run as follows:—"The Rood Screen was re-instated in thankfulness for victory and for the safety of the men of Ashford who have survived the perils of War — remembering before God those who have given their lives in the cause of justice and freedom and whose names are here recorded." Below are the words, "Their names liveth for evermore." The designer was Mr. W. D. Caroe, architect to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.

Even within the past fifty years there have been several pulpits in the church. The first that can be remembered was an old-fashioned "three-decker," which stood against the south-western pillar of the tower. Above was a huge sounding board, and on the upper storey the clergyman stood to preach his sermon; the middle compartment was used as a reading desk, and the clerk sat below. Neither compartment faced due west, although the reading desk looked slightly down the nave, but the others faced the north. The old "three-decker" was taken down in the time of

Canon Alcock, and in its place a plain oak pulpit was erected, while, against the opposite pillar, a new handsomely-carved reading desk was erected by the late Mr. G. E. Jemmett. In the Jubilee year of 1897 this reading desk gave way to the fine marble pulpit which now embellishes the Church. It was designed (being his last finished work) by Mr. John L. Pearson, R.A., the eminent architect of the newly-erected Truro Cathedral. The execution was carried out by Mr. John Hitch, of Vauxhall. The pulpit is of richly carved Hoptonwood stone, the columns dividing the panels being of highly-polished grey Devonshire marble, thus bringing out by contrast the full beauty of the work. The upper portion consists of winged cherubs and ornamental sculpture, the central compartment containing the figure of our Blessed Lord (as the Good Shepherd), and on either side two of the four Evangelists under similar canopies, the figures standing out so boldly and being chiselled with such artistic skill that each is a statuette in itself. The pulpit is approached by a flight

of steps, protected by a handsome wrought brass balustrade. On an obscure part of the pedestal are cut these words: — "To God only be all Glory, A.D. mdcccxcvii." The pulpit was the joint gift to the Church (as a thank offering) by the late Mr. Robert Elliott and his sister, the late Miss Elliott, the ceremonial dedication taking place on Sunday, 5th December, 1897. When the new pulpit was erected the old reading desk was cut down into a prayer desk and at present stands within the altar rails.

The handsome brass lectern took the place of the ugly pulpit, by the removal of which the fine mouldings of the south-west columns of the tower were opened up to view. This alteration was made by Canon Alcock. It may be mentioned that this Vicar met with strenuous opposition from the parishioners with their old-fashioned notions when he proposed to improve the church by scraping the stone-work of the dark paint with which it was covered. They were shocked. Such sacrilege was almost scandalous! But the Vicar had his

way and thus the stone pillars and arches were scraped and made, by their brightness, to kill the hitherto sombre and inartistic appearance of the interior.

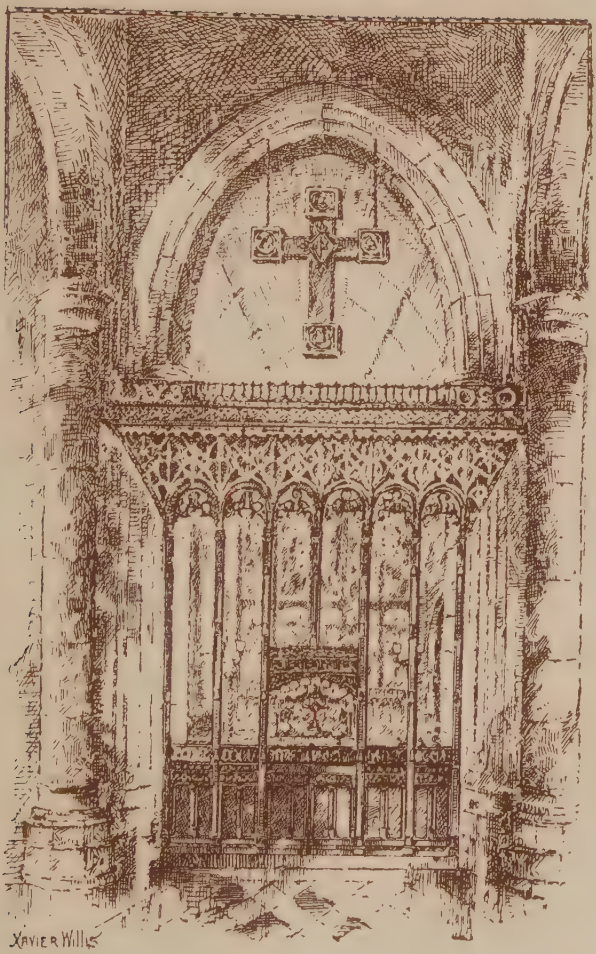
The small Litany desk standing under the tower was presented in 1892 by the Misses Cooper in memory of their sister.

The octagonal font was placed in the church during Sir John Fogge's time, and around it, in quatrefoils, are shields in which the Fogge arms, alternating with roses, used to be. Only one, however, remains. The font, which now stands under the west gallery, was originally placed in the middle of the building, and, as recorded on a tablet on the south wall, one of the Flint family was buried under it in 1836. The foundation of the church must be honey-combed with vaults, for, according to the Warren manuscript, the whole floor was once covered with slabs with inscriptions, stating that the remains of the persons named lay below.

Until gas was introduced at Ashford the Church was lit by candles, placed in an enormous brass globe suspended by a chain

from the beam nearest the tower. This was on dark afternoons. Evening service was unknown until Canon Alcock about seventy years ago came to Ashford, and throughout the week the doors were closely locked. In the Nonconformist chapels, however, service was held on Sunday evening and many members of the Church of England were accustomed to attend. Small wonder that the Established Church sank into disrepute at that period of its history!

Some caprices of building are to be noticed, but each one is easily explained. Looking eastward from the nave it will be seen that the chancel is not in a line with the main building, but leans slightly to its right side. This peculiarity is to be seen in many churches—at Sandhurst, in Kent, the altar cannot be seen from the nave—and the idea has a pathetic origin. When Our Saviour took His last breath upon the cross He drooped His head and inclined it on one side; the old architects bore this in mind when designing churches, and symbolically inclined the chancel always to the right side.



THE SCREEN.

It will be noticed that the apices of the eastern and western arches of the tower are not opposite each other, while the arch of the tower facing you when entering by the north door is not in the centre, an irregularity accentuated by the Royal Arms being placed in the middle. This irregular manner of building arches was not at all uncommon among the disciples of the Perpendicular style of architecture.

The centre pillar of the south side of the chancel is not upright, a malformation that can be detected by looking towards it from the Repton Chapel. Other pillars in the chancel are also giving way. A few years ago great alarm was felt for the safety of the building, especially when it was found that the oscillation of the tower was causing the pillars and arches to give way in all parts of the church. Prompt measures were taken to straighten up the former, and by dint of clever work success attended the efforts of the builders. Thus was the nave saved from collapse. Some doubt about the safety of the chancel was felt a short time ago, but an expert declared that al-

though the pillars were out of perpendicular there was no cause for alarm.

THE CHANCEL.

HE alterations in no part of the church have been greater than in the chancel, which is probably the oldest part of the church, although the main structure remains as it was years ago. There are three arcades on each side springing out of plain slender columns similar to those in the nave. The stonework is entirely free from ornamentation, and the capitals are very plain. On the left-hand side, on the top of one of the pillars, is a small tablet recording the fact that the Rev. Francis Whitfeld, vicar of Godmersham and Challock, and Rector of Westbere, is buried near this spot, together with his two wives.

A great feature of the chancel consists of the rows of oak stalls now occupied by the

choristers—the seven outer ones on each side and the two which face the altar. Twelve of the former were the original seats occupied by the priests from the College. In an old drawing that hangs in the Parish Room only six seats on each side can be counted, and the two that now face the altar are absent, and Warren speaks of only twelve. The two new ones were made in Canon Alcock's time, and so clever is the workmanship that it is impossible to distinguish the new from the old. The latter seats are solidly made, and their peculiarity is not only that they lift up but that the underside is most beautifully carved. The bosses are different in design. The one now occupied by the Vicar is symbolical—the pelican feeding its young with its life's blood. These seats are much commoner in Roman Catholic countries than in England, and are known in France as "misericordes," being used for the aged who are able to rest on the under brackets in that part of the service where the congregation are not allowed to sit. These same seats are sometimes called

"nodding" seats for the reason that while the sermon was in progress the occupants were obliged to sit on the brackets instead of the large seats. But the sermons were long in those days—lasting two or three hours—and, if by chance the members of the congregation who sat here dosed and lost their balance, they were unceremoniously precipitated to the ground through the seat pitching forward. Such is an old tradition handed down from past generations but both churchmen and antiquarian scoff at the story as a silly joke. The lower seats now occupied by the choristers are quite modern, but beautifully embellished with carved panels and raised ends. It should be added that when there was no choir in the chancel the old College stalls were occupied by leading residents in the town.

Looking towards the altar we see a strange mixture on either side of the Communion table. To our right are two richly-carved modern chairs and a comparatively modern prayer desk and credence table; on our left is the battered old stone tomb

of Sir John Fogge, much of its ornamentation having been stolen and the rest damaged by Low Churchmen of Commonwealth days. And this reminds us of the revolution through which the Church of England passed when Cromwell and his Roundheads held sway in England.

Ashford was a hot-bed of Royalists, but upon the Parliamentarians sending a small army down from London they were vastly outnumbered, many being slain and some captured, while others escaped towards the coast to save themselves by crossing the Channel. The Cromwellians, unchecked, wrought havoc with anything which they considered contrary to their ideas of religious worship, and among other things which suffered was the Church itself, and, although there is no direct evidence to prove it, there seems but little doubt that many of the brasses were uprooted and the ornamentation on many of the tombs destroyed. But happily the monuments in the Strangford chapel entirely escaped injury. Following upon the advent of the Cromwellian soliders the Royalist vicar of

Ashford was ejected, and a Presbyterian appointed in his place. The churchwardens, one of whom was Joy Star and the other William Worsley, were equally opposed to what they considered Romish idolatry. In their fanaticism the latter pulled down ornaments of the altar, and a great pile was made in the market-place of the town, and here the altar ornaments and other articles taken from the church were burned in solemn silence. Grim evidence that they gloried in their work of destruction was shown by the fact that the churchwardens had a stone placed in the wall to commemorate the event with their names engraved upon it. But the day of retribution was at hand. In the year 1695 the parishioners subscribed a large sum and a new altar-piece was set up, while, in a fit of indignation, Mr. Marsh, a local lawyer, pulled down the stone erected by the side of the chancel, bearing the destroyers' names, and picked out the inscription. This old stone, in its damaged state, was part of the pavement outside the chancel door until fifty years ago.

Ashfordians gained considerable notoriety during the reign of Charles I., and that monarch despatched Archbishop Laud to visit the place and make a report upon the religious state of the inhabitants. His Grace wrote thus:—"At and about Ashford, in Kent, the Separatists continue to hold their conventicles, notwithstanding the excommunication of so many of them as have been discovered. They are all of the poorer sort, and are very simple." He then goes on to explain how the ringleaders, named Brewer, Fenner and Turner, were cast into prison; how the first-named escaped to Rochester, and there "put a great many simple people, especially women, into great distempers with the church;" and how he was re-captured. Ultimately called before the High Commission, he stood silent, "but," says Archbishop Laud, "in such a jeering, scornful manner as I scarcely ever saw the like. So in prison he remains." It was during the reign of Charles I. that most of the troubles of the nation were attributed to the action of the Bishops, and so prejudiced

the action of the Bishops. The anger of the people in one case became a comedy of prejudice, for Wallington in his history describes how, in the year 1640, among the soldiers quartered at Ashford, one unfortunate fellow, whose name was Bishop, fell into ridicule. His comrades dressed him like a Bishop, he was called before a mock courtmartial as the cause of the troubles of the Church and Commonwealth, and condemned to die. "His associates, while hanging him in jest, nearly hung him in earnest, for he was nearly strangled." After this the soldiers entered Ashford Church and pulled up the altar rails.

Until 1882 an Italian altar-piece stood in the chancel, but, although it was a handsome specimen of wood carving, it looked quite out of keeping with the surroundings, while, being very high, it hid much of the stained-glass window behind it from view. The late Mr. Robert Furley therefore in 1882 replaced it with a new reredos, and a brass plate placed in the Repton Chapel states that it was erected to the memory

of his daughter, Mrs. J. D. Mckenzie Von Daldelzen, who died in 1869 at the age of twenty-eight. The design of the new reredos is divided into three portions, and the whole is surmounted by a carved and pierced cornice. In the centre is a figure of Our Lord in Majesty within a niche surrounded by angels in adoration, set in a carved border and bedded in a rich diaper background. The figure of Our Lord is protected by a groined and traceried canopy supported on shafts, and the whole surmounted by a rich rose. On each side of the centre figures are medallions with the emblems of the four Evangelists in high relief, enclosed in carved panels. The sides are divided into three panels by projecting buttresses and traceried heads over, containing the Ten Commandments, the Creed and Our Lord's Prayer, in incised gold lettering on rich rouge Imperial marble. The upper portion of the reredos is of mottled alabaster, excepting the centre, which is of white alabaster, the figure of Our Lord being carved out of a special block. Running the whole length

over the altar table this inscription is carved:—"The: Bread: of: God: is: that: which: cometh: down from: Heaven: and: giveth: life: unto the: world." The lower part or base, with the moulded string over, is of Kentish rag with ashlar. The base is moulded, having a band of quatrefoils on each side.

The old reredos, which came from an Italian church, was removed to the Mission Church in Forge Lane, but eventually it was pulled down, and, upon Canon Tindall finding its handsomely carved pieces lying about in the vestry, he brought them to the College, where they adorn the hall.

The present communion table is enriched with altar cloths for each season of the church, and they are the gifts of Dr. Wilks and Miss Burra.

The altar rails of moulded oak, with panels of tracery and carved crochets, were placed here in 1905. They took the place of rails that succeeded those presented to the church by the Rev. Samuel Warren in 1673, and the latter were in place of very ancient ones which were saved when the

Chancel was sacked and the rest of its ornaments burned in the market-place.

Within the altar rails is the sacrarium, paved with alternate squares of Bethersden marble and white Sicilian marble in 1882. In the early part of 1905, however, great alterations were made, the old paving being taken up. The dwarf walls supporting the screen on the north and south side were re-built with part of this material, while the black marble from the steps around the sanctuary was converted into the capping of the walls. An entirely new pavement was laid down, the material consisting of very choice polished marble mosaic, and in the centre was laid a valuable specimen of Egyptian porphyry, a particular kind of marble. The colouring is simply gorgeous. The pavement is now laid on a lower level — on the level of the lower step — thus giving increased height to the dais supporting the altar table, while more of the old marble tomb to the memory of Sir John Fogge is disclosed, namely, a portion below the plinth, which has been re-worked and faced with some of the original material

taken from the sacrarium pavement. A small space below the base of the reredos was rebuilt with alabaster to match the original work. The colouring of the three steps—white, black and red—has a meaning. The first, a white step, emphasises the distinction with which the penitent reflects upon his offences; the second one burnt black illustrates his contrition; and the third one evinces the fervour with which he resolves on future virtue. Part of the cost of the new adornments to the sacrarium was defrayed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

The Atholl brass, described in another chapter, is on the floor of the chancel, and lower down is a stone slab with a cross cut in the centre and lettering around it, recording the death of the Rev. Thomas Wood, who was for twenty-one years vicar of Ashford and died in 1847. A long black slate in the centre of the chancel is in memory of the Rev. Samuel Warren, another vicar, who was buried under the tower, and the slab originally rested in that spot. The slate also per-

petuates the memory of Sara Johannis Stafford, wife of Samuel Warren. Further reference to the Warren family will be found in the chapter describing St. Anne's Chapel.

On the chancel steps is a slate slab to the memory of " Ann, the daughter of Anthony Irby, Esq., and Mary, his wife, who departed this life 16th of January, 16— (the last two figures are illegible), aged about sixteen months." The three " 16's " form a coincidence. On each side of the above is a stone to the memory of William Whitfeld, who died in 1750, and John Whitfeld respectively.

The chancel roof is coved and boarded with panels.

The lay rectors of Ashford Church are the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and their duty it is to keep the chancel in repair. The line of demarcation is the exact centre of the pillars which support the arches on each side of the chancel.

THE NORTH TRANSEPT.

N the north transept are two tablets reminding us that Ashford was once a military town. Barracks stood at Barrow Hill and Magazine Road takes its name from the fact that the powder magazine stood there. One records the death of Captain T. Smart, of the Royal Engineers, and the other of Surgeon James Evans, of the Seventh Regiment. The old registers show that many soldiers were buried between the Church and the Grammar School about a hundred years ago, when the threatened invasion of England impelled the Government to mass a considerable number of troops in and around Ashford. Other tablets in the north transept record the death of several members of the Norwood

family—one of the oldest in the town and district—while a brass records the death of Major J. S. Fraser, of the 5th Buffs, who was killed in Mesopotamia in 1916. He was a solicitor of Ashford. Another brass bears testimony to the respect in which John Elgar and his wife were held, the former being verger for over forty years. He died in 1888 and was succeeded by his nephew, also John Elgar, who died in 1911, and a deeply cut mural tablet has been erected to his memoory. The Elgar family held the office of verger for over a century. Here in the north transept is an oak tablet recording the names of those 149 Ashfordians who gave up their lives during the Great War.

In one of the corners of the north transept stands the organ, and the history of this instrument is practically a history of the choir. Going back about sixty years we find that the organ stood in the west gallery and around it a small number of ardent, but self-taught, vocalists ranged themselves and led the singing, while on special occasions the treble solos were taken

by Mrs. Sturges, sister of Mr. Matson, the organist. But at the latter's death the choir also ceased to exist. Then, at the invitation of Canon Alcock, Dr. Wilks stepped forward and formed a choir of men and boys, and introduced surplices — a great innovation in those days. It was raw material, but the new Precentor worked hard, and ultimately saw his labours crowned with such a degree of success that Ashford soon lay rightful claim to the possession of one of the best choirs in Kent. An organist was appointed in the person of the late Mr. Alfred Legge. But, previous to this happy consummation, it had been necessary to provide a new organ, and mainly through the generosity of Mr. James Burra, who contributed £300 towards the fund, the present instrument was purchased for £840. Subsequently additions were made at a cost of £400, almost entirely paid for by Dr. Wilks. It was erected in the west gallery, but this position was deemed inconveniently far from the choir stalls. Unfortunately it is completely shut in at the present time,

and no organist can do justice to its beautiful tone. Behind the organ, the choir robed themselves before the new vestry was built, and it is also of interest to know that the manuals, or key-boards, stood close to the choir stalls, some distance from the organ, and they were handsomely carved.

Before the organ was placed in its present position that part of the north transept was covered with seats, while a gallery stood overhead. Years ago a free school was held there, the poor children of the town being educated to the use of the pen and the birch —principally the latter—by the local pedagogue. On Sunday the gallery was occupied by the children of the National School.

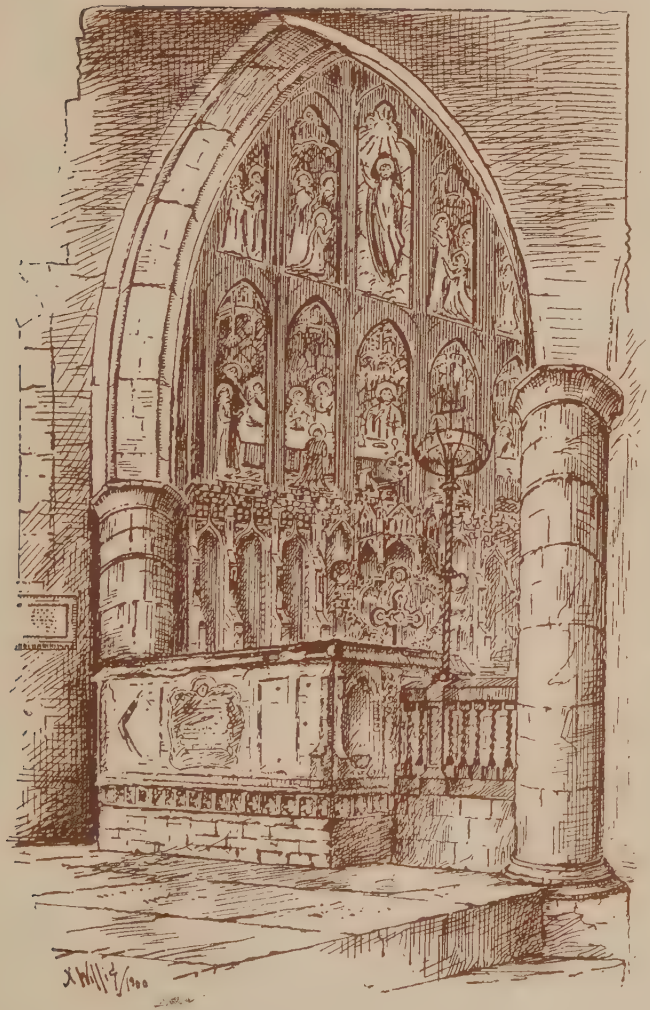
Under the organ and the seats in its vicinity are many vaults, with chiselled slabs on the floor.

REPTON CHAPEL.

TO the left of the chancel is the Repton Chapel, so called after Sir John Fogge, who lived at Repton, now for some unaccountable reason altered to Ripton. He it was who practically repaired the whole of the church, built the tower for the purpose of—to use his own words—"proving the sincerity of his faith in God, his zeal for the common people and special devotion to the House of York." He was a person of considerable importance during the period in which he lived, when the Houses of York and Lancaster were struggling for supremacy. At first he cast in his lot with the Lancastrians, but afterwards, during the reign of Edward the Fourth, became Treasurer of the Household, while he ob-

tained local importance as sheriff of Kent and served as Knight of the county in Parliament. It was during this time that he founded the College of Priests, beautified the parish church and endowed it with houses and lands. Upon the accession of Richard the Third Sir John Fogge was deprived of his possessions, but through the clemency of his monarch suffered no bodily harm. Then came the change in the reigning family, and Sir John regained his sequestered land and other property and subsequently died in advanced years at Ashford, his memory remaining dear to all those whom he benefited in the town. He had a private chapel at Repton, but in the course of years disaster overtook his descendants, and the property was purchased by the Sondes family, and finally drifted into the possession of the Earl of Thanet in the reign of Charles I. Consequently the rights of the Repton Chapel are now vested in the present Lord Hothfield, the Earl of Thanet's descendant.

The tomb of Sir John Fogge, which he himself ordered to be built, stands up pro-



IN REPTON CHAPEL.

minently, part of it inside the altar rail and the rest in the chapel. At the present time the stonework looks as if it had suffered from the ravages of age, as well as destruction wrought by the rabid Puritans, and scarcely any of the ornamentations are left. The inscriptions are in many places undecipherable. Practically the only parts left intact are the head of the founder on the top of the slab and a brass upon the north side, on which is inscribed a list of improvement made in the church by the deceased Knight:—

"Plenius hic sequitur quid fecerat iste Johannes,
Sumptibus ex propriis hanc ecclesiam renovavit,
Cum campanili quod funditus ædificavit
Pluribus atque libris Chorus hic per eum veneratur
Ac ornamentis; Altare Dei decoratur,
Vestibulum ditans et plura jocalia donans
Ut patet intuitu pro posteribus memoranda
Ad laudem Domini cui laus sit nunc et in ævum.
Amen."

In the position of holding the inscription is the figure of an angel, while wreathed around it is a floral design evidently illus-

trating the white rose. Indeed, we find reference to Sir John Fogge's Yorkist leanings also in the carved stone-work of the tomb, as carved roses were once to be seen in the niches between the tracery. Only one of these little flowers is left—in the niche nearest the body of the church and facing the altar. The four niches on one side of the tomb were filled with figures and the beauty of its appearance must have been greatly enhanced. There are four shields at equi-distance, one now quite plain, but at some time the arms of various families with whom the Fogges intermarried were affixed.

According to an old description of a brass representing Sir John Fogge, his figure was clad in armour surrounded by a collar worn by the adherents of the House of York, while his hand reclined on a helmet. To further emphasise their adhesion to the White Rose the dresses of the two wives were fastened by an ornament representing that flower. The spaces occupied by the female figures are clearly outlined. At the foot of all three effigies was the figure of

a dog. The monument must have been erected at the close of the fifteenth century.

About two years ago a startling discovery was made. Someone had almost forced the brass out of the side of Sir John Fogge's tomb, and so nearly was he successful that only one small pin was left. It could not have been the act of a common thief, for the intrinsic value of the brass amounts to a mere song. An archæological maniac must have been the culprit.

There is an old tradition that twenty Knights of the Fogge family were buried in a vault beneath this tomb, but Warren casts doubt upon the story by stating that about two hundred years ago, when this vault was entered, the bodies had shrunk into a very narrow compass, so much so that they did not appear to represent as many as twenty bodies.

Sir John Fogge's monument did not always stand in its present position. Some sixty years ago it was against the wall under the north-east window, although in the days of Warren (1712) it stood as it should—in the position of an altar tomb.

When brought back to its present site excavations were made with the object of finding the remains of the old Founder, but nothing was discovered.

At the time the sketch of Repton Chapel in this book was drawn this corner of the church was open. A robing room for the clergy became necessary, and in 1907 the old chapel was cut off with a wooden screen to the west and a curtain to the south, Fogge's tomb being somewhat hidden, although the inscription is unveiled. One of the most impressive corners of the church is thus absolutely spoilt and the original appearance of the whole interior of the fine edifice impaired.

On the side of the wall of the Repton Chapel are three tablets. One is raised to the memory of Thomas Hussey and his family in 1779; another of more recent date to the Horton family and the third to the Dobrees, a Huguenot family that came over from Guernsey and settled at Ashford.

Near by is a brass plate detailing the benefactions to the church. It reads as follows:—

A.D. 1490.

Sir John Fogge, Knight of Repton, in this Parish, by his will gave Certain Lands and Tenements in Ashford for "the reparation of this Church."

The following properties now represent such Gift:—Three Houses:—Nos. 83, 85, 87, High Street; Ground Rents from the Post Office and Masonic Hall, Bank Street, 4a. 2r. 38p. of Land called Cottyington or Church Fields, and 1a. 1r. 35p. of Cuts of Grass in East Mead and Small Mead. Also £511 11s. 4d. New Consols, produced by the Sale of Land.

Total annual Income, £195 15s. 4d.

Date Unknown.

Herbert's Gift for "the reparation to and for the use and benefit and advantage of this Church."

In 1574 this Gift was exchanged for Lands belonging to Richard Best.

The following Properties now represent such Gift:—4a. 2r. 6p. of Land at Barrow Hill, Ashford—Four Houses

and 31a. 1r. 6p. of Land at Beaver, in Ashford and Kingsnorth, and 1r. 30p. of a Cut of Grass in Pasture Mead, Beaver.

Total annual Income, £114 1s. 0d.

A.D. 1514.

John Essherst, of Beaver, in this Parish, by his will, gave a Piece of Land near the Vicarage, in Ashford, "for the use of this Church."

The property now consists of:—1a. 2r. 10p. of Nursery Land, with Shop, House and Greenhouses at Bears End.

Also £113 3s. 3d. New Consols, produced by the sale of Land.

A.D. 1850.

George Elwick Jemmett, of this Parish, gave 1r. 6p. of Nursery Land, adjoining that given by John Essherst.

Total annual Income of these two gifts, £56 2s. 0d.

FOR EDUCATION.

A.D. 1702.

Thomas Turner, D.D., President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, by deed, gave Black Forstal Farm, Challock, for the Education and otherwise for the Benefit of poor Children in Ashford, who are instructed in the Doctrines of the Church of England.

In 1894 this property was sold for £1,500, and this sum was invested in £1,503 15s. 2d. New Consols.

Annual Income, £41 7s. 0d.

All the above Lands and Houses are vested in "The Official Trustee of Charitable Funds."

FOR THE MINISTER OF THE CHURCH.

A.D. 1665.

Martha Copley, of this Parish, by her Will charged her Property with the payment of Twenty Shillings yearly to "some able and otherwise Ortho-

dox Divine," to Preach a Sermon in Ashford Church every Third Day of June.

There is now a rent charge on property in New Rents to secure this Payment.

Erected A.D. 1898.

Since the foregoing brass was erected the land given by John Essherst in 1514, and by George Elwick Jemmett in 1850, was sold in 1900 for £9,900 to the South-Eastern and Chatham Railway Company, and the result is a great addition to the annual income.

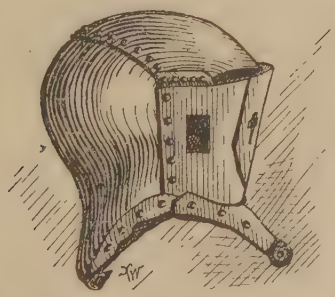
The Vicar of Ashford regularly preaches the Martha Copley sermon. A custom once existed, by which ten poor old women of the parish were invited to attend the service on the third of June, subsequently being entertained to tea at the College and presented with a shilling each.

Under Repton Chapel many bodies doubtless lie buried and many stones on the floor are inscribed. Most of the latter are covered or partly covered by pews. One is

deeply cut and the inscription can easily be deciphered as follows: — "Here lies the body of James Reader, son of James Reader, gent., by Elizabeth, his wife, who died the 22nd day of June, 1715. Aged 4 weekes."

A descendant of James Reader died at Ashford in 1922 at the age of 103 in the person of Miss Agnes Gooding Reader.

The most priceless treasure of the church stands on the wall of the Repton Chapel. It is a heavy tilting helmet, no less than



THE FOGGE TILTING HELMET.

23lbs. 13oz. in weight, supposed to have belonged to Sir John Fogge, and if not to him then certainly to a member of his family.

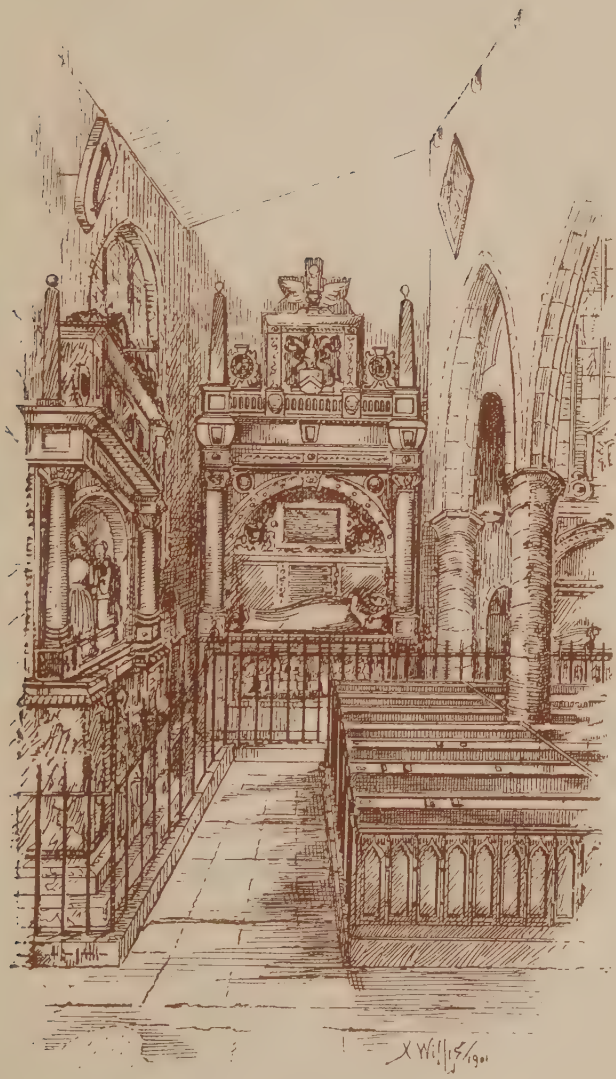
On the right side is a huge square hole, made for hearing purposes. By some this has been attributed to the possibility of its wearer being a one-eyed man, but every authority whom I have consulted upon the subject opposes such a theory. Again, if Sir John Fogge had possessed only one eye the fact would certainly have been recorded in his monuments and portraits, especially as any physical deformity was accentuated by artists of the age in which he lived. Still the helmet is unique—none other like it exists in England—and some time ago a connoisseur of old armour, a Welshman, offered Canon Tindall every inducement, and even a bribe, to let him have it as his own—he would give any reasonable sum of money for it, or he would present a new pulpit to the church in exchange, or he would have a facsimile made, whatever the cost, and give £200 in the bargain. But the Vicar, it is needless to say, remained inexorable, and so the old helmet remains in the church, a priceless gem, so rare that antiquarians from all parts of the world flock to see it.

Before leaving the Repton Chapel it is worth while noting that it was originally known as St. Mary's Chapel.

The windows in this and other chapels are described in another chapter.

STRANGFORD CHAPEL.

HIS Chapel, standing in the south transept, contains the gems of the Church. More popularly is it known as the Smythe Chapel, from the fact that all three of the monuments are erected to the memory of men of that name, but, as explained later on, members of the family became Viscounts Strangford, and it is from this title that the chapel has since been named. On one side of the stone arches we see the tombs of the old Customer lying by the side of his wife, and of Sir John Smythe, kneeling face to face with his spouse. On the right is the tomb of Sir Richard Smythe, reclining in loneliness, although two wives died before and one survived him. Between the tombs can be seen



STRANGFORD CHAPEL.

the old rood doorway; above, projecting from the side wall, are two old helmets, part of the funeral display when one of the Smythe family was buried. Casting a grey light—the colour in neither is very rich—stand two stained-glass windows, the one on the left filled with the Smythe arms and the one to the right erected to the memory of the late Canon Alcock. On the walls are various tablets, within the railing is an ancient chest, while at our feet we see many stones, inscribed in some cases and in others with the old brasses gone.

A part of this chapel was once used as an Archdeacon's Court. At that time an ugly iron railing ran between the pillars, and the tomb of Sir Richard Smythe, which now faces us when we look into the chapel, stood under one of the arches, opposite the figure of his brother and sister. As an act of courtesy Canon Alcock asked Viscount Strangford if he objected to the proposed alteration; but, as the latter declined to agree, the Vicar, acting within his rights, carried out the alterations. So incensed

was the Viscount that, although he had habitually visited the church once in every twelve months, he refused to come to Ashford for many years, and even returned all letters of peace sent him by the Canon. But one day the latter, to his utter astonishment, found Viscount Strangford in the church gazing at the tombs of his ancestors. With outstretched hand he came towards the Vicar, apologised for his conduct of the last few years and expressed his delight at the improvement made by the alterations, which set off the monuments and made them look as they had never looked before.

A detailed description of the treasures in the Strangford Chapel is necessary, but let us first pause and take a glance back into the history of Customer Smythe, the founder of the family who lived and thrived for many years in the district.

The Smythes came originally from Wiltshire, Thomas, like Dick Whittington, going to London to make his fortune. Apparently he succeeded, for the next we hear of him is being located at Ashford as

a customs officer, that town being suitable as his residence, owing to its proximity to the port of Sandwich, while it was not far from London. Subsequently he became known as Customer Smythe, for he it was who made the proposition to farm the customs on foreign merchandise brought into the ports of London, Sandwich, Chichester, Southampton and Ipswich, and in return he was to pay a yearly rent of £30,000. The arrangement proved satisfactory at first, but Queen Elizabeth, whatever her fame as a monarch, never hesitated to lighten the purses of her subjects, came down upon the Customer when he appeared to be making the arrangement a financial success and demanded the payment of a heavier rental. The unfortunate man pleaded poverty, but Her Majesty was inexorable, and her displeasure so preyed upon his mind that he died, a physical wreck, on June 7th, 1591, leaving a widow and twelve children, all of whom are depicted on his tomb. Customer Smythe was a typical London merchant of by-gone days, full of commercial resource, eager for gain

and yet winning respect by his generosity and benevolence. He entered earnestly into schemes for the development of Cornish mines, while he took equal interest in the equipment of ships in conjunction with Sir Walter Raleigh and others. There is but little doubt that notwithstanding his protest of poverty to his royal mistress he was richly endowed with this world's goods. The Manor of Westenhanger, between Smeeth and Hythe, was given him in a fit of generosity by Queen Elizabeth, who visited him there and stayed one night. At that time the mansion was a magnificent building, surrounded by a fine park, but at the present day it is reduced to the level of being the headquarters of a new race-course. Although most of the old Castle has disappeared several buildings, some of the walls and the ivy-mantled Rosamond Town remains. This town derives its name from a tradition that the lovely mistress of Henry II. was kept there. Customer Smythe by his will directed that his executors should provide a suitable monument in Ashford Church,

while he left a considerable sum of money to the poor of the town. At his funeral he asked them "to avoid vain pomp as the World by custom in times of darkness were used," but to expend the money on the poor. Thomas Smythe married a daughter of Sir Andrew Judd, founder of Tonbridge School, and through the influence of his father-in-law became possessed of the Manor of Ashford.

It was the grandson of Customer Smythe, created Viscount Strangford in 1688, from whom the name of the chapel is derived. The title of Strangford has now died out, the last Viscount expiring in 1869. In early days he was an Attaché at Constantinople. Physically delicate, he lived a secluded life, solely devoted to his books.

The Customer's tomb is a handsomely carved specimen of marble and alabaster, the figures of the husband and wife being of the latter material. Both are life-size and lie side by side, he in front clad in a merchant's fur gown and doublet and skull cap of the period, and she at his right side also with gown and cap. While she lies

with closed eyes and hands uplifted he is depicted holding in his hand a Bible, which he is supposed to be reading. The Customer wears a pointed beard and a long moustache. The heads of both figures recline on embroidered cushions, the fine work and the tassels on the two under the Customer's head being exquisitely done. At his feet are two dogs, while nestling against those of Dame Alice Smythe is the figure of a child representing a baby who died when only a few months old. Overhead is a well-turned arch, bedecked with richly-carved ornaments, picked out in blue, red and gold—colours which, when new, must have relieved the pink marble and white alabaster and given the whole a superb appearance. Corinthian columns rise on either side, surmounted by obelisks, and between them hangs the emblazoned coat-of-arms of the Smythes. In bas-relief are carved the effigies of the Customer's six sons, most of whom married the heiresses of Kent families, and his six daughters. It will be noticed that one of the men holds a skull in his hands to denote

that he died before his father—as a matter of fact, at the siege of Cadiz. He is clean shaven; his brothers have pointed beards.

The monument to the right, the one on which a single figures reclines, is erected to the memory of Sir Richard Smythe, the fourth son of his illustrious father, the Customer. Sir Richard was the owner of Leeds Castle, which he re-built, and Receiver of the Duchy of Cornwall. He also, like his father, held an important post in the Imperial Revenue department; three times was he married and strangely enough to a widow on each occasion. He died July 21st, 1628, as the epitaph on his tomb states, "a just officer in his accounts, which he perfected with much contentment when he was trusted. His love to his wives, children and friends was extraordinary and he tenderly did respect them. His bounty to the poor was very great." His third wife outlived him, as evidenced by the fact that she, depicted in one of the effigies at the front of the tomb, does not hold a skull. The five children he had by his three wives are to be seen kneeling be-

hind their mothers. One child was a dwarf, but her father compensated her for this affliction in some manner by leaving her a double portion of his property, namely, £2,500 and £300 a year in land. There is a bolder style in the finish of this monument than in the others. The dead man's figure encased in armour stands out with great distinctness, while above are the figures of cherubs in the spandrels of the arch and of two angels higher up, each holding in its hands a shield bearing a coat of arms.

The third monument was raised to the memory of Customer Smythe's eldest son John, who was knighted by James the First. He died in 1609, possessed of much land in Kent, for, besides owning Westenhanger, he married an heiress, Miss Elizabeth Fineux, who owned immense tracts of country in the neighbourhood of Herne and the Isle of Thanet. There are two figures kneeling in this monument, Sir John Smythe, clad in armour, being faced by his wife, attired in the Elizabethan style. In the lower part of the tomb kneel

three figures, representing his two daughters and a son. There is a great similarity between this monument and that of the Customer's, but the former has not the same depth in the canopy and the figures are not life-size, although most artistically carved.

The Strangfords still possess a vault, but the remains of some of the Smythes are not, it is said, intact. A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1815 says: — "Whilst viewing these monuments I was naturally led to ask where the mortal remains rested, which they were raised to commemorate, and I was not a little surprised to learn that the sanctuary in which they were reposited had been profaned, their mouldering relics thrust into a corner, and the whole vault divided between two families resident in the town."

On the walls are several tablets, referring on the one side to the Smythe family, and on the other to the Jemmetts, to whom has descended the lordship of the Manor of Ashford. Another tablet records the death of Mrs. Curteis, wife of a rector of

Smarden, she herself being a member of an Ashford family.

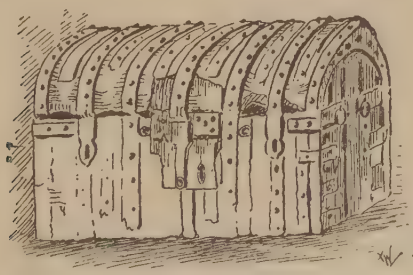
At out feet we find several slabs. One recording the death of a Mr. Bate, a master of the old Grammar School, has a coat-of-arms carved on it, the design being three hands.

A more deeply cut coat of arms is on another stone, dated 1718, and bearing the name of Elisha Brett. Adjoining it, and nearer the Smythe monuments, can be discerned the name of Weller, with a beautifully chiselled coat-of-arms. Unfortunately continual pressure from boots is rubbing out these inscriptions and within the last twenty years a part of the word Weller has been obliterated.

A great many others are half hidden by the pews, but the head of a dark slab is noticeable for its fine piece of carving; it belongs to the Strangford family. There is one recording the fact that John Wallis, vicar of Ashford in 1602, lies buried in the church, and another dark stone with the name of Baptiste Piggott, who came from

Dartford, and was master of Ashford Grammar School.

Two old chests stand in the Strangford Chapel. The one within the railings is of oak, with carving of the linen-folded pattern in the panels. The other, standing by Sir John Smythe's tomb, is decayed with age, held together only by massive iron bands. It is made of pitch pine, a novelty. There is a tradition that it was used as a Peter Pence box, but such an assumption



PETER PENCE CHEST.

cannot be substantiated. For many years the skeleton of a man's leg reposed within, and the old folk would tell you that it belonged to William the Conqueror, or at

any rate a relative of his. But, also for old traditions! it was eventually identified as belonging to a cripple, and had been dug up in the churchyard. Thither it was returned by the late verger some years ago.

No special history attaches to the two helmets that hang in the Strangford Chapel. They were probably family relics, or may have been worn by those whose bodies lie below.

Up to the early part of the last century the Bible, chained to a desk, stood at the entrance of the south transept.

ST. ANNE'S CHAPEL.

TO the south-east of the chancel stands St. Anne's Chapel, a name given in recent years, although many years ago it was known by the same title. Its re-christening arose in this way. Soon after the death of Mr. T. W. Tindall (who died in 1893), his mother and brother — Mrs. Tindall and Canon Tindall—resolved to perpetuate his memory and that of his sisters, Miss Ann Riley Tindall (who died in 1889) and Miss Mary Tindall (who died in 1882), by forming a chapel in the south aisle of the chancel, and while some old documents were being scrutinised it was discovered in an ancient will that a part of the building was

originally called St. Anne's chapel. In every way, therefore, it was most appropriate to revive the old name. In April, 1895, the Chapel was dedicated, and since then has been used for week-day morning service. The decorations are rich and chaste. In front is a carved oak screen; then comes the sacrarium, paved with St. Anne's marble—rouge royal marble and onyx; and then the right wall of the chapel encased in beautiful red alabaster above the rail, while below it is an artistic design made from the three marbles which deck the floor, together with squares of alabaster and glittering mosaic work of gold-covered stones. The altar is of carved oak, and the dossell and curtains are coloured according to the seasons of the church.

There are several tablets on the wall of the chapel. In the far corner are two, the top one being in memory of Dr. Cordeaux, who died in 1844, and his wife; the deceased gentleman made his fortune as a doctor at Canterbury, and, coming to Ashford, endeared himself to the poor by attending them free of charge. A tablet in

the far corner is erected to the memory of a member of the Warren family, and some particulars of this family, which produced many eminent men, are worth recording. According to the pedigree in possession of General Arthur Warren, of Basingstoke, I find a John Warren, born about 1595, who was the son of John de Warren, eldest son of Lawrence, the third son of Sir Edward Warren, of Poynton, near Southport. He was episcopally ordained and became tutor to two young men—Lamplugh, who became Archbishop of York, and Sancroft, who became Archbishop of Canterbury. These two were life-long friends of his son Samuel, vicar of Ashford. It is in this member of the Warren family that Ashfordians are interested, inasmuch that he held the living from 1673 to 1720, and he lies buried under the tower of the church. Born at Chipping Campden in 1637, previous to coming to Ashford he held the living at Preston, near Brighthelmstone, Sussex. He had ten children, of whom some died and were buried at Ashford, John and Richard became eminent divines, and

William wrote the manuscript history of Ashford Church. John Warren was successively vicar of St. John's, Margate, domestic chaplain to the Bishop of Exeter, Prebendary of St. Peter's, Exeter, Surrogate to the Chancellor and Archdeacon Proctor to Convocation. Richard became rector of Cavendish and Archdeacon of Suffolk, and was conspicuous as an antagonist of Bishop Hoadley in the controversy about the Eucharist and edited the Greek Commentary of Hiercoles upon the Golden Verses of Pythagoras. This same Richard Warren married Priscilla, daughter and coheir of John Fenner, gentleman, of Ashford. His children included Samuel, who went to South Carolina, which he represented in the Assembly in 1795, and it was his grandson who became the General Warren family in the American Civil War. A daughter of Richard Warren, Dorothy, married John Ganning, F.R.S., surgeon-extraordinary to George III. and surgeon-general to the Army. Among other notable members of the Warren family were John, Bishop of Bangor; Richard, physi-

cian to George III.; Richard, a lieutenant-colonel in the 3rd Foot Guards; Charles, a Commissioner of Bankruptcy, residing at Sundridge, Kent; John, Dean of Bangor; Pelham Warren, F.R.S., physician to George IV.; Frederic, Admiral and Commander-in-Chief at Devonport; John, an eminent mathematician; Richard Laird Warren, Commander-in-Chief at the Nore and West Indies; Sir Charles Warren, K.C.B., major-general, born 1798; and finally Sir Charles Warren, K.C.B., F.R.S., son of the above and now lieutenant-general and a most distinguished soldier and administrator, at present residing at Ramsgate. He has two sons and two daughters. It should also be stated that one of the family was called by his chums "Cooking Pot Warren," because he invented the celebrated cooking pots. He was always inventing and losing money over it; he had more than twenty patents, and yet I am told that "he died without a sou." There have been no less than five F.R.S.'s in the Warren family, although not directly from father to son. The Warrens have in many

centuries been noted for independence of character, preferring the crust of bread or a hollow tree with liberty to flunkeydom. But there has been a good deal of talent in the family; that was irrepressible.

By the side of the window is a tablet erected to the memory of members of the Creed family, while next to it is an elegantly-carved tablet in memory of the Apsleys, one of whom, Arthur Apsley, was a Cornet-Lieutenant in the 1st Horse Guards and died in 1719. The quaint inscription states that here "lies the small remainder" of the gallant officer. A descendant of this family was a builder in Ashford and he erected most of the houses in the town. He lived on the premises now occupied by the *Kentish Express* offices, and it was he who made the first chimes of the Church. Below is a beautiful white marble tablet, with a pink frame of the same material, placed there by their children in memory of the late Mr. and Mrs. Robert Furley. At the extreme corner is a plain tablet, erected to the memory of the Whitfeld family, a member of whom was Mr.

Henry Whitfeld, a doctor and great benefactor Ashford, a philanthropist far ahead of the age in which he lived. His name is perpetrated in the Whitfeld Hall, while he also built the Sanatorium, now the Isolation Hospital. Another tablet in this chapel was erected to the memory of Mr. Thomas Thurston and his wife, the former dying in 1881; and a brass plate to the memory of Mr. Frederick Hughes Hallett, who died in 1911.

Under St. Anne's Chapel are several vaults. One, just under the screen contains the body of a Dering. At the corner, near the Strangford Chapel, are two other slabs, with the names of Samuel and Mary Mann chiselled, the date being 1797. Many other stones are covered by the flooring in the pews and the tiles leading up to the altar.

THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS.

LTHOUGH, with the exception of the one Early English window, the Perpendicular style is apparent in every window of the church, very few, if any, date back to the fifteenth century, and certainly none of the glass. When the nave was lengthened it was hoped that the mullions of the west window would be saved; but no, everything was demolished. The frame of the north window now stands in the College grounds. The old north transept window, erected in the reign of Edward the Fourth, at one time contained a portrait of Sir John Fogge; in the south window were the figures of a Valoignes and his two wives,

one of them a Fogge; and in the west window were portraits of Edward the Fourth, Richard the Third, the Black Prince and several noblemen.

Strolling around the church from east to west we find a stained-glass window in the Repton Chapel, erected to the memory of Elizabeth Murton, wife of an Ashfordian, who died on January 26th, 1858, aged 51 years. The right compartment is to the memory of the husband of this lady. The colouring of these windows is subdued in tone, cold greys above and below throwing up the warmer tints of the centre-pieces. In one compartment David is playing the harp, in the other Ruth is gathering ears of corn, and in the third King Solomon is represented. The centre light was erected to the memory of John Matson, forty-three years organist of the church, who died in 1865, aged seventy years.

In the Repton Chapel, and facing the west, is a window in which figures represent three of the apostles—St. Peter in the centre, with St. James on his right and St. John on his left. Under one is recorded

the death of James Wall, the owner of much property in Ashford, which occurred in 1852. He gave almshouses to the town. The others to whose memory the window was erected were Thomas and Hannah Startup, who died in 1857 and 1849 respectively, and Charles Dorman, a little fellow of eight years old, who died in 1854, and Louisa Dorman, whose death occurred in 1860, aged forty. The descendants of both these latter families still live in Ashford. The window is brightly coloured, ultramarine blue being the predominant colour, varied with red and yellow.

Over the altar is a fine Perpendicular window, which was thoroughly renovated recently, most of the lost coloured glass being replaced. The names of several Ashfordians appear at the base of the window, including the following:—Richard and Caroline Lewis (died 1875 and 1871 respectively), John and Mary Ann Elgar (died 1883 and 1885 respectively), Annie and Ellen Bugler, the two daughters of the late Mr. J. U. Bugler, and his wife, Lucy Spencer Bugler, who died in 1880. In the

small lights at the top several Scriptural characters are presented; the middle compartment refers to the Ascension, and below we see the Lord's Supper depicted. It is a fine window, bolder in design and colouring than any other in the church. The prevailing colours are blue and crimson, relieved by yellow and sage green.

On the south of the altar, and overlooking St. Anne's Chapel, is the twin window by Willement. Here we have the figures of St. Paul, St. Barnabas and St. Luke, and the inscriptions show that one part of the window was erected to the memory of the Rev. Thomas Wood, vicar of Ashford, who died in 1847, at the age of 78; another to the memory of the Rev. J. P. Alcock, erected out of gratitude for the kind attention he showed to Caroline Harrison, who died in London in 1854, the result of a railway accident; and the third to the widow of the Rev. W. Curteis, erected by Canon Alcock.

The next window, facing the altar, was inscribed by the late Canon Alcock to the memory of his daughter, who died in 1857

at the early age of eighteen. The story in the pictures is pathetically appropriate. The centre light depicts our Saviour blessing little children, in that on the left He is represented as the Good Shepherd, and in the right He is knocking at a door, just as He must have knocked at the door of the old College on that twenty-second day of June, when He took unto Himself the Vicar's beloved child. The feature of this window is the fine tracery and scroll work above and below the central figures.

Next to it is a window to the memory of Richard Greenhill, a member of the old Ashford family, no longer represented in the town, who died in 1867, aged seventy-seven; and Sarah, his wife, whose death occurred in 1866 at the age of seventy-four. One light shows our Saviour healing the blind man at the pool of Bethsaida, the other the Good Samaritan offering help to the sufferer by the wayside, and the third our Saviour walking upon the sea. In the lower squares of the window are the emblems of Faith, Hope and Charity. The colouring is very fine, but the figures are

not well drawn, although the drapery is good.

We now turn the corner into the Strangford Chapel to find a beautiful old heraldic window in amber, relieved by the colouring peculiar to each coat of arms of the different members of the Strangford family, whose memory is thus perpetuated. There are eighteen panels in all.

The other window in this Chapel was placed there in 1888 as a mark of respect to the late Canon Alcock, M.A., "one of the Six Preachers of Canterbury Cathedral, for forty years vicar of the parish and rural dean." The inscription adds that "his parishioners and friends erected this window upon his resignation of the living, November 14th, 1887." The window is subdued in tone, and the large lights contain tall figures of the Virgin Mary, St. John the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist and St. Elizabeth. In the smaller lights are angelic figures.

The south side of the body of the church contains no stained-glass windows, but due west is a large one, facsimile in shape to

the one over the altar. When the nave was lengthened in 1861 this window was inserted. The ten largest compartments represent incidents in the life of Christ, the centre one being the Crucifixion, while above in twelve lesser lights stand the Apostles. Those to whose memory the window was erected were Richard Greenhill (died 1829), Edward Watson Simonds (1861), Charles Mercer, of Maidstone (1861), John Elliott (1861), Harriet Elliott (1822), Mark Dorman (1860), Mary Ann Dorman (1853), Elizabeth Greenhill (1862), William Whitfeld (1838), Martha Whitfeld (1833), and Archbishop Sumner (1862). This window is the most brilliantly coloured one in the church, crimson and ultramarine blue being intermixed with pale shades of blue and green and rich purple.

The north window was erected to the memory of one of Ashford's worthies, Mr. Robert Furley, who died in 1887. He was an antiquary and author of the "History of the Weald of Kent." His legal appointments in the town were innumerable. In

the small top lights are scrolls, bearing the words of the Benedicite, held in the hands of angels. The four large figures in the centre are those of St. Augustine, St. Theodore, St. Alphege and St. Anselm, Below are incidents in the life of St. Augustine, culminating in his consecration as Archbishop of Canterbury. Although new, this window has the appearance of being the oldest in the church, owing to the depth of its colouring—striking evidence that the artists of to-day are by degrees discovering the secrets of the old masters. It has a somewhat sombre appearance, the only bits of colouring that catch the eye being the palm leaves held by St. Alphege and the crimson robe of St. Augustine kneeling in the cathedral. All the tints are in beautiful harmony, but there is no disguising the fact that a window with such subdued colouring, to show detail and richness, should be placed in any other than a gloomy north aspect. So fine is the tracery that it requires the aid of a field glass to see it clearly. The framework is shaped like the Alcock window opposite,

and it is in the happy fitness of things that these two men, who faced each other nearly all their lives, the mover and seconder of so many matters that benefited their beloved church, should, in the guise of the windows erected to their memory, face each other still.

OLD BRASSES.

EXCEPTIONALLY rich in brasses must have been the Church in bygone days, but, owing to theft on the one hand and wanton destruction on the part of the Puritans on the other, most have now disappeared. Ancient chronicles mention several remarkable brasses, but the only ones left to us are four in number and all but the one at the side of Sir John Fogge's tomb, already described, are in a mutilated condition.

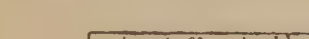
In the north transept are to be found the remains of a brass, affixed to the slab recording the death of one Thomas Fogge.

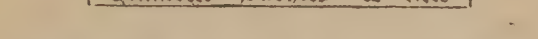
The two large figures, representing a man and wife, are gone, and the pieces of brass at the top consist of two scrolls issuing from the mouth of each, that from Thomas Fogge bearing the inscription: "*Pater de coelis, deus misere nobis,*" and from his wife, "*Spus. sancte deus misere nobis.*" Below are the figures of the two little children remaining intact, while underneath is the inscription: "Here under this stone lyeth the bodyes of Thomas Fogg, esquyer, lateli Sergeant-Porter unto the moste famous princes, King Henry VII. and the VIII. and Eleanor, his wiff, the whiche Thomas decessed the day of the year of our Lord. M.C.V.C., on whose soule J.H.U. have mercy."

On the floor of the chancel, under the carpet, is the most cherished possession of the church, a brass that ranks among the rarities of Kent. According to the old French inscription it states that the body of the late Lady Elizabeth, Countess of Atholl, daughter of the Lord Ferrers, lies there, her death occurring on October 22nd, 1375, adding "May God absolve her from

ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE ATHOLL BRASS.

her sins." The exact words in the old French are:—





Antiquaries and historians have severally tried to identify this lady, but without arriving at any definite decision. That she was a widow of one Earl of Atholl and married John Malweyn is the only fact known, but even the latter's identification remains enshrouded in mystery, as no one of that name can be traced among the residents or property owners of Ashford. Tradition has always said that she married "The Scott," who built Scott's Hall, Smeeth, and that later they lived at Chilham Castle. This Scott was Robert Bruce. The brass itself is far from perfect. The full-length figure of a woman, clad in a closely-buttoned gown of French pattern, is armless, but the face and dress remain perfect. There can

still be seen a decorated canopy over her head and in each top corner is a brass coat-of arms; the one on her right is the royal arms of France quartered with England. But this brass must have changed its position of recent years, as in an old print of the Atholl brass it is over the Countess's head, carried as a banner in the centre of the canopy. The corner now occupied by these royal arms originally contained the Atholl arms. The slips that at one time ran along the two sides are incomplete, but some parts remain.

Lower down the chancel is a piece of old brass with the head of a priest. It was found elsewhere in the church and inserted in the stone it now adorns in recent years.

THE CHURCH PLATE.

BY Sir John Fogge's will he left a valuable collection of jewels to the Church, but their fate was a mystery, although one can shrewdly guess that some unscrupulous followers of Cromwell—for, after all, the Protector himself was honest—could have told us where they went.

The oldest plate now possessed by St. Mary's is neither of great age nor beauty. It is a Communion Cup, made in 1619 during the reign of James I. It is quite plain, with no hall mark, although it is of sterling silver, and the only lettering are the initials of the maker, C.B., as a monogram. The height of the cup is $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches, the diameter of the bell-shaped

bowl is $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches and the base of the stem $4\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Another cup, which forms the pair, is almost a facsimile of the one al-

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY COMMUNION CUP.

ready mentioned, but is of better finish, and incribed under the foot is "Ashford An° Dom. 1633. 13ozs. 12dwts. Cost £3 16s." Its dimensions are the same as the other.

The next oldest plate consists of a pair of flagons made during the reign of Queen Anne. They, too, are plain, quite free from ornamentation, but the date, March 27th, 1711, is to be seen, as well as the word "Ashford." They are fourteen inches

high, weigh 50ozs. 18dwts. and 52ozs. 4dwts. respectively, and were manufactured by John Bodington. Two small plates evidently go with them, as the inscription on one is similar.

But the most beautiful possession is a silver-gilt chalice, with paten, given by

THE SILVER-GILT CHALICE.

Canon Tindall in memory of his uncle, the late Mr. Thomas Walker, in September,

1896. The shape is elegant and the fine workmanship of the most chaste description, while the jewels with which it is mounted are large amethysts. The inscription ends as follows:—"Requiescat in Pace."

A paten, with the date 1785, is of silver, but judging from the characters of the letters used in the inscription they were engraved much later than the period mentioned.

Two glass cruets, mounted in silver, with Maltese crosses overhead, were presented a short time since by the late Miss A. R. Tindall, sister of the Vicar, and the Rev. A. H. T. Ashton Gwatkin, then vicar of Margate.

CURIOSITIES OF OLD DOCUMENTS.

GLANCE through the parish register brings to light the fact that in 1625 no less than eighty-six Ashfordians died from the plague. Several old names and places are mentioned; for instance, we read of several members of the Strangford family dying and being buried in the seventeenth century. Then in 1678 Samuel Ward, innkeeper at the Saracen's Head, died, and the mention of this old hostelry shows its great age. We find that in 1675 John Stringer, gentleman, of Bybrook, died, and in 1705 Nicolas, son of George Toke. The death of a centenarian is recorded in 1726, when Dorothy Browne died at the

age of 102 years. Another Ashford woman, Mrs. Mary Baker, was almost 100 years old when she died in 1682. Two other deaths are worth mentioning, that of Martha Cowell, who in 1722 "was put into the ground without any service being performed at the request of her husband;" and Mrs. Mary Lawnds, who, by a strange coincidence, was born on a Christmas Day, died on Good Friday and was buried on Easter Day. A singular entry is to be found in 1664. It reads as follows: — "December 14th. Mr. Jacob's father." This entry seems rather a slight upon the memory of the unfortunate parent, who is not even given a name. The burials during the years preceding the close of the seventeenth century state that the bodies were buried in woollen. This was in accordance with an Act passed in the reign of Charles I. To quote from "*A Saunter through Kent with Pen and Pencil*" —"At this period the consumption of English wool was not equal to the supply and the Legislature brought in a measure for the purpose of creating an abnormal

demand. It was decreed that all dead bodies should be buried in woollen shrouds and for over a hundred years the obnoxious Act remained in the Statute Book."

Looking through the marriage register the most remarkable entry is that on June 4th, 1734, when Thomas Johnson married a Mary Dubbin, his age being eighty-seven and hers sixty-seven.

We now turn to the parochial accounts and find a constantly recurring item in the amount paid for wine, which it was then customary to give to the clergyman just before he preached his sermon. On one occasion, however, in 1867, we find that Mr. Warren on Christmas Day preferred receiving the cost of the liquor, three shillings, instead of the wine itself. In 1675 we read of payments being made for the head of a fox, a pole cat and a hedgehog, but perhaps the strangest item of all was that of five shillings paid to John Stoney for cutting elder trees out of the pinnacle of the steeple. The birds have frequently been known to deposit seed in the walls, but the remarkable feature in

this case is that the trees were allowed to grow to such a size as to necessitate much labour in removing them.

The following is a list of the Vicars of Ashford since the year 1282:—

1282—Robert de Derby.

1316—William de Lucy.

1319—Martin Ercheband.

13——Henry de Sudyngton. Founded a chantry.

1355—Thomas de Merston.

13——Simon de Gaynesburgh.

1361—Adam Coriat, called Adam de Warwick.

1368—William Windsore.

1379—Richard de Cotyngham.

1380—Solomon Russell.

1419—Richard Bockyer.

1436—Robert Hedyngham.

1460—Thomas Wylmot, first Master of the College.

1468—William Wylmot.

1493—William Sutton, D.D.

1501—Hugh Hope.

1509—Edward Mongeham.

1512—John White, D.D.

1519—Richard Parkhurst, M.A.
1547—John Ponet, D.D. After Bishop of Rochester and then Winchester.
1551—Robert Foster.
1553—Thomas Knell.
1565—John Fuller.
1571—Thomas Pett.
1579—George Kerslake.
1581—Joseph Mynge, B.A.
1584—John Holland, B.A.
1594—Thomas Poulter, M.A.
1602—John Wallis.
1622—Edmund Hayes, M.A.
1638—John Maccuby, M.A.
1643—John Boden.
1647—Nicholas Prigg.
1662—Richard Whitlock, LL.B.
1667—Thomas Risden, M.A.
1673—Samuel Warren, B.A.
1721—John Clough, M.A.
1765—Charles Coldcall, M.A.
1765—James Andrews, D.D.
1744—James Bond, M.A.
1826—Thomas Wood.
1847—John Price Alcock, M.A., Honorary Canon, Canterbury.

1888—Peter Francis Tindall, M.A., Honorary Canon, Canterbury.

1914—Lionel Payne Crawford.

1915—Thomas Karl Sopwith.

1924—Harry William Blackburne, M.A., D.S.O., M.C., King's Chaplain.

The following is a list of churchwardens, commencing in the year 1841:—Messrs. L. A. Reeve, Francis Brothers, John Worger, William Taylor, Thomas Cobb, Thomas Elliott, B. K. Thorpe, Charles Dorman, Charles Hammond, James Lewis, Mercer, Thurston, Stonham, G. Greenhill, Andrews, Green, G. Wilks, J. U. Bugler, C. Harrison, G. Elliott, F. Hyland, G. Foord, W. Stedman, W. Whitfeld, W. Hill, A. Parrock, J. Fraser, Alfred Hart, G. Skelton, T. Coulthard, Thomas Edwards, Dr. Wilks, Julius Kingsford, J. C. Wilkinson, C. H. Read, T. C. Hooke, Clarke Howland, E. E. Thomas, W. K. Coke, T. F. Wallis, J. S. Fraser, S. P. Bartlett and G. G. W. Perkins. Of the above several held the office many times.

IN THE BELL TOWER.

TWO doorways—one from the outside and the other from the south aisle—lead to the stairs of the belfry turret. Stepping upwards we come to a strange little corner with a passage that leads out of the small tower into the main one. Here, just a few steps higher, is the belfry. On the walls are to be seen tablets recording the ringing of certain peals on different occasions, with the list of campanologists attached, the earliest dating from 1763. One tablet is framed in a beautiful piece of wood carving—an old fireplace that originally stood in an ancient hostelry, known as the Blue Post, which adjoined the house of the Grammar Schoolmaster. Standing by the doorway is a huge cannon ball fixed in a frame of iron. It is of immense weight,

and was once used as a clock weight, but its origin, or any other part of its history, is unknown. In the next storey are the bells—eight old and two new ones. The inscriptions read as follows:—

1.—Lester and Pack, of London, fecit 1762.

2.—Lester and Pack, of London, fecit 1762.

3.—Josephus Hatch, me fecit, 1620.

4.—William Hatch, made me 1651.

5.—Josephus Hatch, me fecit, 1633.

6.—May Jesus Christ be praised—1898.

7.—Josephus Hatch, me fecit, Petrus Parris, c.w. 1620.

8.—Thomas Mears, of London, fecit 1796.

William and Joseph Hatch had foundries at Ulcomb, Kent; Lester and Pack were of London.

In 1898 the old 6th bell, made by Joseph Hatch in 1620, was re-cast by Taylor, of Loughborough, and inscribed as above. The re-casting was executed none too soon, as we find in a minute of the vestry book that in 1878 this same bell was reported to

be "cracked in the head!"

There is in the possession of Mr. Clarke Howland, of Ashford, whose grandfather was an ardent campanologist, an interesting manuscript chronicling the performances of ringers a hundred years ago. From this old book I find that the Ashford tenor was carried away to be re-cast in 1795 and brought back and re-hung four months afterwards. The writer adds:—"The new tenor suits the other bells exactly, is an exceeding good bell and weighs 23 cwt." The following is a list of ringers in 1792:—Thomas Eves, Ambrose Reeve, Thomas Leeds, John Howland, Anthony Hills, John Wanstall, John Hills and Henry Hadds.

For many years Ashford has gloried in magnificent chimes. In 1885 new ones were hung, and at the present time they play the four favourite hymns, "We love the place, O God, "Abide with Me," "Rock of Ages" and "Hannover;" the following patriotic airs: "God Save the King," "Rule Britannia," "God bless the Prince

of Wales," and "The March of the Men of Harlech;" and the following old favourites: "The Harp that once through Tara's Halls," "Drink to me only with thine eyes," "Oh, dear, what can the matter be?" "Home, sweet Home, "Cornrigs," "Comin' through the Rye," "Ye Banks and Braes," and "The Minstrel Boy." The inclusion of the National Anthem made two musical bells necessary, and these were erected at the same time as the new chimes. Their inscriptions are:— Gillett and Co., Croydon, 1885.

The old chimes which made way for the new set in 1885 were made by an Ashford builder, Mr. Apsley, a clever piece of work when it is remembered that they were his first attempt of the sort.

The present clock was placed in the tower in 1885 at a cost of £225, by Gillett and Co., Croydon. The works of its predecessor were removed, and are now doing duty elsewhere, but its hands and immense face were kept as trophies. It was replaced by a smaller clock, which covered much of the decorations of the tower and

spoilt its proportions. The copper face was turned into several small jugs, which are greatly prized by those who remember the old clock that had signalled the time of day to Ashfordians for over two hundred

CORNER ON THE TURRET STAIRS.

years, and the small hand hangs in the "Man of Kent" Hotel. Some idea of the size of the clock can be gleaned from the fact that this small hand measures three feet eleven inches long.

Ashford was one of the few towns where the ringing of the curfew bell remained in vogue when other places discontinued it. But no longer does it toll "the knell of parting day."

All the stones leading to the belfry and the tower top are of Bethersden marble.

Out of the belfry there used to be an entrance into a secret chamber, but the opening is bricked up. This chamber is very small, but just large enough to admit of anyone being there quite out of sight. Through the north wall of the stone-work were holes, and the Royal Arms that can be seen from the north transept is pierced with holes too. Thus it was possible for anyone to look out of the hiding place and watch the entrance of the church without being seen himself, while he could overhear conversation below. When it was used, by whom it was used, and for what it was used, is a mystery. Who could this Paul Pry have been?

THE VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

ROM the top of the tower—the structure which measures 120ft. from the ground to the top of the pinnacles and is a landmark for many miles around—a glorious panoramic view meets the eye. Away to the west are the richly wooded parks of Godinton, Hothfield and Surrenden, with Great Chart mounted on a hill towards the south, and the Westwell Downs to the north, with Charing Mill looking down upon the snug little village and the historic ruins of the old episcopal palace below. At Surrenden the Loyalist—Sir Edward Dering—fought the Cromwellians, sometimes meeting with success, but more often with failure, for his mansion was

besieged and sacked by them on four distinct occasions. Nearer to us, but still in the west, can easily be seen Repton, now a farmhouse, but once surrounded by a richly wooded park, embracing the piece of sandy country known as the Warren, and the residence of old Sir John Fogge, who sleeps in the church below, and who built the tower upon which we now stand and look from its summit over the rich domains which once were his.

In the north we see the chalk-speckled Downs, with little Westwell Church — a perfect specimen of Early English architecture—nestling at their feet. Wooded Eastwell — where the last of the Plantagenets worked in disguise as a bricklayer after the fatal battle of Bosworth—extends in a north-easterly direction towards the coast, but cut by a gap in the hills, through which the River Stour runs away to Canterbury, and where battles occurred between some Ashford Loyalists and the Puritans, a well-known cavalry officer being slain besides many men. Away over those Downs marched the Canterbury

Pilgrims, wending their way from the west of England to the cathedral city. Closer to us, along the winding Kennington road, is Bybrook, an Elizabethan house, and its group of outhouses standing out clearly in its fringe of green meadows and lofty trees. Here lived Sir W. Shorter, a Lord Mayor of London, whose daughter married Sir Robert Walpole.

Picking up the trail of the hills again we follow them above Brook church, over the great tumuli or ancient burial grounds which give them an uneven appearance, away towards Petham, where is the old Roman road known as Stone Street, still a highway, although we cannot see it from where we stand. Folkestoneward the Downs lose themselves in the Channel, whose waters can be seen on a clear day, when the dusky smoke trail of passing steamers hangs over the sea, and the white sails of lighter craft glint in the rays of the summer's sun. In the east is Westenhanger, the seat of Customer Smythe, whose bones lie below our feet in the Strangford Chapel. Nearer to us,

the beautiful knoll at Aldington and the villages of Smeeth, Mersham, Sevington and Willesborough, while slightly towards the south is the level stretch of land known as Romney Marsh. Up as far as Appledore the sea ran not so many centuries ago and, landing at this spot, the hordes of blood-thirsty Danes must have rushed across the country at our feet, pillaging, murdering, and destroying in their path till they reached and burned the church at Great Chart.

Still further south the Sussex Downs tip the horizon, and occasional glimpses of the sea are caught through the clefts in the hills. Here can distinctly be seen Fairlight and the old mill standing like a sentinel over the ruins of the castle on the one side and, on the other, the tract of country where William the Norman and Harold, the last of the Saxon kings, fought out their deadly struggle on the battle-field of Hastings, the men of Kent dying the death of heroes in the foremost ranks of the vanquished.

That is the view beyond.

But down at our feet nestles old Ashford, now enclosed by straight and modern dwellings and gripped by the long arm of expansion. Yet the quaint roofs of some of the houses, jumbled together and weather-beaten, remind us of the town's venerable age. The New Town and South Ashford are already joined and Willesborough has become a suburb. Another hundred years and Great Chart and Kennington may come into the clutches of the rapidly spreading town. Who knows? Another hundred years and the green patches and woodlands we now see around us may be sacrificed for serried rows of artizans' dwellings—when Ashford becomes the great commercial centre it promises to be. Who knows? Another hundred years, aye, in a quarter of a century's time, the tall chimneys of factories may rise out of the ground and challenge in height the old church tower upon which we stand, and, worse calamity of all, the fair country around us—the Garden of England—may be honey-combed with coal pits and become a smoke-begrimed waste. Who knows?

But through all the centuries to come, out of the unknown future, Ashford Church should stand unsullied as a fine specimen of Perpendicular architecture, commanding the love of those whose lives shall pass beneath its shadows.

THE END.

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